

## MASTER OF SCIENCE BY RESEARCH

The burden of rapid socio-economic transformation: case study of women's economic empowerment in post-conflict Rwanda

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# **The Burden of Rapid Socio-economic Transformation: Case Study of Women's Economic Empowerment in Post-Conflict Rwanda.**

**By**

**Pascal Niyonkuru**

**April 2015**



*A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the University's requirements for the Degree of Master of Research*

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## **Abstract**

This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the gender reforms in post-conflict Rwanda by examining how gender barriers have limited many Rwandan women's abilities from benefiting from the country's economic opportunities. The study is an attempt to provide analysis of the social and economic challenges despite huge political support for gender equality. Drawing on comparative theoretical perspectives and primary information from quantitative data and qualitative research acquired from fieldwork, this project argues that for the time being, women are facing hardships due to the recent governmental gender reforms. Relationship between men and women remains defined by traditional behaviours, whereas the current constitution is unequivocal on gender equality. Legislative reforms towards gender equality present enormous gaps because they do not take into account cultural constraints, which amplify many discriminatory customary practices, hindering women's economic empowerment and worsening gender-based violence and domestic violence. The implementation of such reforms encounters patriarchal norms which encourage resistance of many groups believing they are defending their inherited rights.

**Keywords:** Gender, Economic empowerment, Development, Rwanda, Reforms

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## Acronyms

ADBG	African Development Bank Group
AI	Amnesty International
BBC	British broadcasting Corporation
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EAC	East African Community
EDPRS	Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy
GDP	Gross domestic product
GMO	Gender Monitoring Office
GOR	Government Of Rwanda
GVB	Gender-Based Violence
HDI	Human Development Index
HRW	Human Right Watch
ICRW	International for Research on Woman
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MGFP	Ministry of Gender and Family PLANNING
NISR	National Institute for Research
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PGN	Practical Gender needs
RDHS	Rwanda Demographic and Health Survey
RWAMREC	Rwanda Men's Resource
SGN	Strategic Gender Need
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNSC	United Nation Security Council
WB	World Bank
WDR	World Development Report
WEE	Women Economic Empowerment

## Definitions and Descriptions

**Pro-femme TWESEHAMWE:** An umbrella organisation working for the advancement of women in Rwanda.

**DUTERIMBERE ASBL:** A not-Profit Association working with low-income entrepreneurs, primarily women by providing them financial Services in Rwanda.

**RWAMREC:** A non-governmental organisation working to promote gender equality and to prevent gender-based violence in Rwanda.

**GINI Coefficient:** A measurement of the income distribution of a country's residents.

**EICV:** Rwanda Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey

**GMO:** A public institution which role is to monitor progress towards gender equality and equity

**Women's Economic Empowerment:** Women's economic empowerment in this research project is defined as "the individual capability to define and control their economic needs and results." To achieve this, women have to be able to control resources, manage their income, and have a real participation in decision-making from the family unit to the national level

# **Chapter One: Introduction**

## **1.0 Background of the study**

Empowering women has been often mentioned as a goal of development assistance. However, while a wide variety of literature debating on the way in which empowerment has been addressed or might be assessed now exists; many obstacles remain in doing so. Moreover, various projects and programmes that are designed to empower women are more ambiguous in attempting to define the term empowerment based on their own context, let alone to evaluate its success. In spite of the identification of empowerment as a primary development assistance goal, “none of the development agencies such as the World Bank, UNDP and others has managed to develop an accurate tool of measuring empowerment” (Malhotra et al., 2002: 3). Moreover, many countries around the world have tried unsuccessfully to implement new gender policies in the context of enhancing women’s economic status.

This study focuses on women’s economic empowerment, and emphasises how gender reforms can negatively affect women in their economic development process when some of the important societal norms are not taken into account. The study uses Rwanda as a case of study.

## **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

The concept of the Millennium Goals was introduced in the 1990's and characterised part of the humanitarian revolution. This resulted in many programmes being implemented to bring socio-economic development in developing countries.

The post-conflict Rwandan Government has transformed the country from a failed state and now the Rwandan economy is viewed as one of the best performing in Africa due to its incipient structural shift that has been implemented as post-genocide economic development. Gender equality and women's empowerment are considered as a crosscutting issue. Rwanda is among the vanguard of countries where development experts consider the country as an excellent example of successful post-conflict recovery (Bigsten and Isaksson, 2008).

There is a large female proportion in parliament in Rwanda so it is a leader in gender policies. The 2003 Rwandan Constitution stipulates that 30 per cent of seats have to be attributed to women in all representative bodies, while the government endorses many international treaties to quell gender inequality (ABGD 2008). Rwanda has set out to improve the status of women in society and this is presented as one of the few nations in the world with a clear political agenda regarding empowering women both socially and economically. However, women in Rwanda unfortunately still make up the most vulnerable people in the social order as they are financially marginalised. Female-headed households mainly form part of the poorest socio economic group of the country's population.

Recently, development specialists have acknowledged the connection between the economic improvement of women and national economic growth. Research has demonstrated that improving the access of women to the economy results in development. Studies have revealed that if women have control over their salaries

and other assets, they are more likely to reinvest their wages in enhancing the health, nourishment, and education of their families, which translates into sustainable results for these families in the long term (Kabeer, 2001; WDR 2012; Kaur, 2007; OECD 2011). Nevertheless, there has been little discourse as to how gender policies can negatively affect women.

The examination of the effects of gender reforms on women's empowerment results in a deeper understanding of the role of such gender reforms in the post conflict countries as well as the complex aspects of women's economic empowerment. Undertaking research on the implication of gender policy on women's economic empowerment offers a rewarding and exciting opportunity to explore the potential consequences of post-conflict gender reforms on gender equality. It increases the importance of considerations for policy makers on the operational aspects of women's economic empowerment. In addition, it provides contribution to the growing body of scholarly literature on how gender and social dynamics influence economic growth and development.

Furthermore, understanding the reasons behind continuing gender inequalities in the developing world, despite some gender policy reforms being in place, gives a valuable understanding regarding the role of such gender policy on women's empowerment.

## **1.2 Hypothesis**

Despite the Rwandan Government's commitment to gender mainstreaming, this study hypothesises that women continue to be economically marginalised. This is because the patriarchal attitudes of society are not taken into account in these policies. In addition, Rwanda's gender equality platform for the time being has had

consequences, which are unintended and the majority of women could be potentially disempowered. For example, there are advanced equitable inheritance and land laws as well as land policy that the government has implemented, however due to legislative gaps, many women fail to benefit from these reforms. Despite the fact that laws and policies are reinforced at a local level by the government, customary laws are still applied in many rural areas. As discriminatory hiring practices persist, employment and equitable income reforms have been ineffective. Therefore, many women lack control over their income, which hinders their ability to be empowered economically.

During the 1994 genocide, customary gender divisions of labour were fundamentally altered. Women took on traditional male occupations such as working in cash-crops as men mobilised for combat, engaging in male dominated employment sectors and tilling land. In parallel to performing customary domestic and care giving duties which increase women's work burden, many historically male designated tasks are still being carried out by women. Women are expected to contribute to household income and gender policies have fostered this, but they fail to adequately take into account social inequalities which expect women to manage domestic responsibilities. There are serious implications for women's health as a result from the burden of "double work" as it restricts the type of work they can partake in, their mobility and their potential to be economically empowered. On the other hand, it has been found that as a woman's income increases so does her susceptibility to gender-based violence, this was investigated by Rwandan Men's Resource Centre. Customarily, in Rwanda a man's identity is defined by his ability to protect and provide for his family. Some men may feel that their masculinity is under threat as women's income

increases and so in an effort to reassert their dominant household position this can manifest into violent behaviour against women (RWAMREC 2010).

This study has clearly investigated that the traditional practices between men and women still define their relationships and this is not compatible with the Rwanda 2003 constitutional guarantees of gender equality. The top-down gender inclusive economic strategy challenges cultural identities and is being rapidly implemented by the current government. As a result, the average woman's ability to make strategic life choices has been unintentionally diminished by the post-conflict gender reforms.

This project's qualitative field research and secondary quantitative studies suggest that changes in gender relations are minimal outside of the most central political spheres. This signifies a disconnection between the implementation process of such reforms and government policies.

### **1.3 Aims and Objectives**

Aim:

The aim of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the gender reforms on the women's socio-economic livelihood.

Objectives:

- To explore the dimension of women's empowerment and its associated issues.
- To explore the post-conflict gender reforms.
- To evaluate the challenges arising from government's reforms to achieve women's economic empowerment in Rwanda.



- To show the impacts these policies have had on the gender environment in the country.

## **1.4 Research Methodology**

A triangulation method consisting of literature review, case studies and primary research was used in this study.

The literature review gives an initial general view of the dominant theoretical and practical views of women's empowerment. It includes a discussion of the implementation of women's economic empowerment programmes. Furthermore, it examines existing studies on women's economic improvement. Recent articles are reviewed in order to ensure the validity of this research.

Case studies have been used as references in order to compare with existing women's empowerment projects. The case studies give information on the challenges and opportunities of gender equality promotion within programmes and policies targeting women's economic empowerment.

Primary research tools consisting of questionnaire and interview questions are designed to ascertain the level of awareness of gender barriers and gender equality in Rwanda, as well as the respondent's perception on the government's responses to women's economic empowerment.

## **1.5 Guide to the Study**

This study is organised into six chapters as follows:

The first chapter consists of women's empowerment background studies. The aim of this section is to summarise the theories on which the study is based in terms of women's economic empowerment. Additionally, it presents the problem statement

and demonstrates that despite the researchers and policy maker's work on women's economic empowerment and its implication on the national growth and development in general, a gap in the literature persists on how gender policies can be a hindrance factor in the women's empowerment process. It also provides a brief picture of the social and economic situation of the country. This chapter also presents the aims and objectives as well as the research methodology.

The second chapter provides a critical review on the common definitions of women's empowerment, it then presents the gender empowerment background, drawing a historical parallel and exploring the concept of feminism, gender inequality in society and female economic empowerment within the development studies debate. The study continues on the issue of women's economic empowerment, assessing it as a catalyst in attaining other forms of empowerment and exploring how the socialisation of gender roles can limit women from making their own life choices. The first step to discern the challenges of implementing fair and impartial policies is to analyse the complex aspects of women's economic empowerment.

Chapter three presents the historical background necessary to support this project's hypothesis, that women are economically marginalised because of the pre-existing inequalities which continue to define societal roles, studying Rwandan historical gender barriers and the women's economic status in the post-conflict era. Analysing Rwanda's patriarchal culture and its ramification over time on women's development process provides a significant understanding of how gender relations have been gradually developed and how they continue to affect women in their economic improvement process.

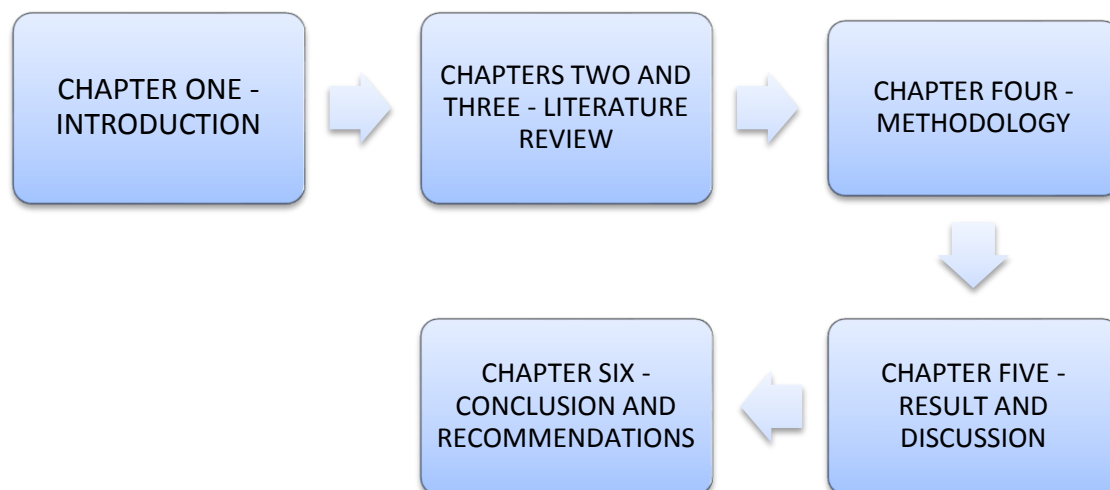
Chapter four presents in detail the methods used to collect data as well as the research methodology. The chosen philosophical paradigm, the sampling, and the

limitations are discussed in this chapter. The liability and validity of data are also discussed in this chapter along with the associated ethical issues.

Chapter five presents findings and analysis of data. The data analysis provides a cross integration of an in-depth examination of the post-conflict government laws and policies implemented to enhance women's economic status, literature, qualitative and quantitative field data.

Chapter six provides the thesis summary, conclusion remarks and a way forward to future research.

**Figure 1.1: Thesis plan diagram**



## 1.6 Country Context

Rwanda is a state of 26,338 sq km situated in Central Africa, being landlocked between the DRC (Democratic Republic of Congo), Burundi, Uganda and Tanzania. The population is 12,012,589 people out of whom 6,026,391 are female and 5,986,198 males (Geobase, 2013). The growth rate of the population is estimated at 2.7 per cent, while life expectancy is estimated to be 55.4 years (UNDP 2013). The UNDP awards an HDI (Human Development Indicator) of 0.429 for the country, a

drastic increase from the 0.232 value in 1990 and 0.313 in 2000. These positions reflect improvements in the livelihoods of Rwandans since the onset of the civil war in 1990, manifested through the development of the educational and health system since the end of the major military conflicts in the region. Nationally, as more resources were made available for the civilian population, growth was experienced. Post-genocide, international aid was funnelled to Rwanda in an effort to quell the negative social effects. Economic development has been experienced since the genocide; with government, plans to expand further the economy, as presented in the Vision 2020 programme (Ministry of Finance and Economic Promotion 2000). However, the decision on the part of some international governments to suspend aid packages (BBC 2012) can have negative social outcomes, despite the international community arguing that parts of the funds are used to sponsor the Eastern Congo conflict and subsequent mineral looting (Mullins and Dawn, 2008).

Located in the Great Lakes region of Africa, the country has experienced severe harshness due to prolonged conflicts which have persisted over past decades, engulfing the region; conflicts which have resulted in some of the worst humanitarian crises (Stedman and Tunner, 2003).

In terms of alleviating social conditions and meeting the MDG's, the country has progressed on some development goals while others are pending in their resolution. Concerning gender equality, the country still has a long road ahead, yet it has successfully introduced reforms targeted at obtaining equity. A brief analysis shows the gender labour force participation ratio between females and males, which is 1.019 (UNDP 2013), suggested by the higher proportion of women in Rwandan society. This fact is reflected in the parliamentary gender ratio discussed above, the rights being enforced by the constitution. While reforms have been undertaken,

Rwandan society is still experiencing patriarchal practices; with domestic violence being also a recurrent and prevalent phenomenon, tolerated by both men and women. Amongst other strategies, the Ministry for Gender and Family Promotion was created implementing legislation targeted at promoting gender equality and women's socio-economic empowerment (MGPF 2010). As 19.2 per cent of the population lives in urban areas, women in these centres have the chance for better education in the race to fill the gender divide in the public and research sectors through higher education. In the rural areas the situation is drastic as women are intensively involved in agriculture and other household jobs including child care, and the situation results in less educational participation. A series of microfinance opportunities and land distribution programmes have been undertaken in order to alleviate the lives of rural women. Yet the issue remains unsolved (International Land Coalition 2011); Women remain wage earners for 34 per cent of households, but current estimates and land distribution patterns make it impossible to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment goal before the 2015 deadline. Programmes that have been implemented to prevent maternal deaths are aimed at medical care and support for the pregnant women, with awareness campaigns to educate and popularise contraception methods. A governmental organisation was also set up, the "Maternal Death Audit", a commission which enquires from medical establishments about the causes of death (UNFPA 2010).

The societal challenges explained above have taken their toll on the environment. The country is keen to protect its resources and increase sustainability, but it faces several challenges. Unsuitable agricultural practices have resulted in large tracts of land being affected by deforestation, soil erosion and overgrazing. Poaching and the reduction of habitats pose threats to the local ecosystems, pushing certain animals to the brink of extinction. This impact has been mitigated by the creation of natural

parks and sanctuaries namely Volcanoes, Akagera National Park and the Nyungwe reserve which protect a number of endemic species, while the rest of the land is mostly agricultural. In this regards an anthropogenic impact was reduced through the enactment of a ban on the use of plastic bags (BBC, 2012). Questions with regards to renewable energy and climate change are open as the country faces the threat of acute weather changes which can lead to flooding and droughts as proven by past natural disasters. By reducing lumber consumption and introducing reforestation in the required areas, the government has moved to implement programmes dedicated at mitigating erosion and water security by increasing access to water (UNDP, 2013).

Lastly, there is the issue of global partnership for development, which the country has implemented in the lines set forth by the Paris Declaration (2005) in terms of humanitarian assistance. In the aftermath of the genocide the country has received large amounts of aid which have been used to sponsor the activities mentioned above (Reyntjens, 2010; Prunier, 2011). Additionally, enquiries both in the present and the past have accused the regime of intervening in the DRC conflict as a result of the opportunities represented by the lucrative mineral trade through the use of various non-state actors (Lemarchand, 2009; UNSC 2001; Prunier, 2011) which has led to the reduction of several aid packages (Hall, 2012). The long term impact of the measure is yet to be seen. The country has sought greater regional integration, firstly by being a member of the African Union and secondly by being part of the East African Community, with plans for further integration through a common fiscal market.

# **Chapter Two: Women's Economic Empowerment in the Literature**

## **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter will first outline the common definitions of women's empowerment, and will then present the gender empowerment background, drawing a historical parallel, and exploring the concept of feminism, gender inequality in society and female economic empowerment within the development studies debate. The study will continue on the issue of women's economic empowerment, assessing it as a catalyst in attaining other forms of empowerment and exploring how the socialisation of gender roles can limit women from making their own life choices.

Economic empowerment refers to the process of sharing power within a system and has two identified extents within the context of gender assets and activities. Through different social relationships in various institutional areas such as family, local and social, assets are gained. Assets encompass incentives incorporating material and monetary possessions and also financial means, while elusive assets comprise information, abilities and dexterity as well as interest and participation in composed social and political systems (social capital). The principles and standards are reflected on access to assets which oversee asset control, dispersion and trade (Kabeer, 1994). Activity alludes to the capacity of individuals who follow up on and demarcate their objectives. Self-empowerment is derived from singular movement and mental traits. With the removal of social, political and economic impediments social empowerment is made, whereas shared empowerment goes out due to associations with others (Cheater, 2005).

Empowerment has been defined by the World Bank as an extension of the opportunity in decision-making and effort (World Bank 2002). Arguably, the definition of empowerment which is the most referred to in the literature comes from Kabeer (2001) who defines empowerment compactly as “development in individuals’ capability”; with important life choices being managed in a situation where this capability has been denied to them. Feminists, such as theorists Reeves and Baden (2002), view empowerment as a system by which women are able to control changes of gender norms. Women in empowerment have to have the ability to make decisions and participate in the exercises that make changes which involves their future evolution, but also requires alteration in the perception of the individual. However, self-assurance is required by women to recognise their full qualification for such flexibility. Taking power from men or allowing people to pay little respect to gender are not the feminist’s views regarding empowerment. Feminists consider empowered people as those who have the understanding and capabilities of how to use their fullest potential (Reeves and Baden, 2002; Kabeer, 2001; Malhotra et al., 2002; Rowlands, 1997).

Women’s empowerment concept requires the extension of women’s opportunities as it is a multi-faceted notion. This will enable the ability of women to settle on self-governing decisions and to exploit chances which will shape the outcomes of their lives. The perspectives to empowerment are incalculable and interrelated; for example, the capacity to make important choices, such as family planning, education and nourishment. Economic empowerment is vital to all these ranges, as this research shows. Once women become financially subordinate, this reduces their bargaining force and their capacity to impact choices that influence their lives. Entrance indicators through which women can meet their needs involve the power to



create earnings and control assets (Rogers and Youssef, 1988). Women who are capable to earn and control their assets manage to achieve the flexibility to use their income into their family's well-being and human capital. On the other hand, sustenance, education and other ranges of human advancement cannot be obtained without financial empowerment.

Divisions such as age, regenerative health, ethnicity, regional location and fitness remain components which mean that women cannot be seen as a homogeneous class. To enhance a women's financial status, the literature suggests that a multi-sectorial strategies is needed. Impartial organisations to legitimise and secure women's rights and access to assets and opportunities are then incorporated. The literature shows disparities on which paths yield the most successful returns. There is a necessity to expand women's access to financial control, abilities and market advancement, employments, enterprise, credit, property and different possessions as the OECD emphasises (OECD 2011). The World Bank takes on an enduring investment improvement approach and contends that the first stage towards accomplishing women's economic empowerment is to provide equivalent access to education and professional training. This will provide women with essential abilities to compete in different spheres of activity and the trust to be able to make their own decisions (World Bank 2010). More fair and impartial sharing of non-paid jobs, the destruction of structural gender orientation differences in employment opportunities and control over profitable holdings is accepted by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency as the basic requirements to enhancing women's financial status (Swedish International Development Agency 2009). The most significant component to women's investment in self-sufficiency has been asserted by Jejeebhoy and Sathar (2001) who conclude that by obtaining sturdy financial

foundations women's rights and status can be changed. Institutions can provide an easy access to professional careers to the same levels as that of men.

Achieving economic empowerment and the steps taken towards this purpose change because countries, academics and other development actors have usually contradictory views dependent upon their objectives. As with any concept, there are multiple viewpoints pertaining to the issue of women's empowerment in the respective literature. Despite this diversity, four prevailing trends exist in the field. The first one is that because empowerment refers to "power play," it suggests that power transfer in the system requires a removal of power from one group. In the case at hand this means that for women to be empowered, they must have been disempowered, in order to obtain or overturn the level of power in the system. Secondly empowerment can never be given to entities by a third party, as it is a trait that is achieved bilaterally. Thus, from this perspective, the development agencies that deal with the issue of female empowerment have to create the prerequisites for social change, instead of simply imposing the new statutes. This means self-reliance has to be created prior to the "awakening" movement of empowerment. Thus, empowerment is grown from within society and cannot be imposed. While strict definitions of empowerment deal with the concept of grassroots movements, they also emphasise the fact that participants need to understand what they want to change, and how they wish to achieve it. Historical evidence of women's empowerment has relied on large social movements to change society, yet newer schools of thought believe that empowerment has to be achieved with resilience at the individual level, enabling thus a bottom-up approach that is connected with grassroots politics (Sen, 1997). As a final note, empowerment is a process that is

constantly evolving alongside society, thus it is fluid in application and enables a gradual increase in the feeling of empowerment.

Women's economic empowerment excludes the one-size fits all approach; instead it calls for initiatives based solely on the contextual situation. Women's economic empowerment in this research project is defined as "the individual's capability to define and control their economic needs and results." To achieve this, women have to be able to control resources, manage their income, and have real participation in decision-making from the family unit to the national level.

## **2.1 Historical Evolution of the Perception of Women's Empowerment and Gender Relations**

### **2.1.0 Antiquity to Modernity**

Scholars such as Lee (1979) interpret hunter-gatherer societies as more gender equitable, with reduced levels of violence, some tribal societies having a tradition of female shamans. The shift in cultural perception is argued to have happened somewhere around the time of agricultural modernisation as human groups started to settle down and societal roles evolved. In addition, as domestication of plants and animals occurred, patriarchal perception was enforced, transforming the household in which males had more leverage. This translated in the modification of structures with women being assigned the role of domestic workers, being viewed as property, a perception reflected in the patriarchal desire to own and absolutely control assets or family members (Zerzan, 2008).

Female figures began to be seen as the protectors of the familial environment, syncretism being a part of religious evolution as discussed by Eliade (1988). Norris (2004) examines the roles of politics and religion in state formation and their interdependency in assuring the rule of law; with such institutions in place, women had little choice and had to become members of societies, which infringed on their rights.

In Western society, until the Renaissance, women were defined through marriage as until they left the household they were the property of their fathers, becoming afterwards the property of their husbands. Early proponents of equal education were Christine de Pizan and Catherine of Aragon who defended their rights and supported and popularised women's education in a time when it was uncommon for women to receive education. Humanist scholars, such as Vives and Agricola, disputed the views that women do not require education, insisting that at least noble women should benefit as much as their male peers. This argument has been developed also in the ranks of male authors who, informed by the ideas of the Enlightenment, promoted an approach centred on human rights (Walters, 2005).

### **2.1.1 Enlightenment to Present**

In the political rhetoric, political reforms lead to the integration of liberal ideas, which allowed citizens to vote. The process of allowing the suffragette movement political power was described as part of the first wave of feminism. However, that was not the only objective, as women began asking for sexual, reproductive and economic equality, and an array of movements and campaigns began (Freedman, 2003). In New Zealand and Australia in 1893 and 1895, while the right to vote was introduced, the metropolis was not so keen on accepting this. Only women over 30 who were

property owners were allowed to vote. This was due to the breakthrough occurring as recognition of women's efforts towards the war and also with the implementation of the Representation of People's Act (1918).

The revolution in the aftermath of the Second World War and the spread of socialism and communism, followed by the birth of the second wave of feminism led to another reconsideration of gender roles. Simone de Beauvoir's works (1971) represents the core beliefs that advocate the end of cultural and political inequalities in order to put an end to sexist perception (Simon, 1999). Simone's work was influential during the 1960's, as a variety of groups were asking for equality on all grounds and the US saw a rise in the Civil Rights Movement as a result (Freedman, 2003). In the 1970's, women were hesitant to have children as they were active in employment and had the perception that it would negatively affect career progression. Nevertheless the development of women was undermined by domestic inequalities because due to social norms women had to execute both domestic activities and child care work, and therefore, more effort and time was required for further improvements in other areas of their lives (Shapiro, 1985). This explains how women were restricted in their decision-making due to the patriarchal views.

As a result of the failure to obtain reform of the previous waves and as a lack of resolve, this third-wave of feminism was prompted. The 1980s and 1990s' social changes have reminded feminists to change for the better their strategies. They argue that more attention on eradicating global issues that inhibit women's potential such as rape, incest and prostitution is needed, and that it is also important to advocate the elimination of certain cultural practices which affect the evolution of girls such as female genital mutilation.

By emphasising the study of discrimination and with better understanding of gender inequality issues such as homophobia, racism, and classism, the international agencies fuelled this debate and agreed that these gender inequalities can then be cleared from the global agenda. By introducing a humanitarian approach in global issues and millennium development goals (MDG's) this changed the perception of gender equality. In its rhetoric of gender and sexuality, the current academic approach is mostly poststructuralist. In order to obtain the long sought-after equality, it represents social constructs which deserve to be challenged (Fredman, 2003; Gillis et al., 2007). In order to conclude that gender is created culturally and socially, post structural feminism parallels the belief of deconstruction and post-structuralism (Rowe-Finkbeiner, 2004).

The social construction of gender and the discursive nature of reality are viewed by postmodern feminists as having multiple viewpoints and sides that cannot be easily pacified (Abbot et al., 1997).

## **2.2 Gender Equality within Classical Theoretical Perspectives and the Pro-African Feminist Debate**

Anarchy as an ideology supports gender equality in its activity (Bakunin, 1990; Brown, 1995), however, contesters such as Proudhon debate on the actual role of women in society and family, and not the individual (Proudhon, 1840). Anarchism opposes capitalism at all levels, as well as the state, as it represents a form of authority; this rhetoric has been mixed with patriarchal criticism due to the perception that in current society men dominate (Brown, 1995). Male supremacy, abuse and other negative behaviours are vital to hierarchy, in essence the mechanisms that

maintain the functioning of the state. Famously, Ehrlich states: "as anarchism is a political philosophy that opposes all relationships of power, it is inherently feminist" (Ehrlich, 1979: 153).

Liberal feminism is a liberalist doctrine which emphasises gender equality by the means of political and legal reorganisation (Tong, 1989); this view asserts that women are capable of achieving equality, at their own free will, with little impact of drastic reform. The discourse of the perspective includes reproductive rights, harassment in all its forms, voting ratios and participation, the right to education, elimination of the wage gap, pro childcare reforms, unhindered access to healthcare and advice, and the decrease of the rate of sexual and domestic violence. MacKinnon (2005) asserts that liberalism rejects feminism as it offers only a perception of events resulting in the system, with the economic system approach restricting empowerment (Morgan, 1996). Criticism was aimed at the theory as it favours women from a developed background, with little regard to other social economic groups, proposing a 'one size fits all' approach (Mills, 1998).

Women are disproportionately represented in the labour market and in the domestic sphere, which in their view holds women down for the socialist feminists (Zinn and Dill, 2002). Marxist's ideas about exploitation have connections with the oppression of women and labour socialist feminism.

These feminist writers view marriage, child-care, domestic work and prostitution as methods by which women are subjugated through a patriarchal system. This fails to recognise women and the substantial labour involved (Zinn and Dill, 2002; Stokes, 2000). Rather than the concentrated individual approach, socialist feminists centre their debate as a societal issue. These traditional Marxist ideas have been criticised by many socialist feminists who consider these ideas of being silent on gender oppression. Clara Zetkin was one of the Marxist leaders, and with many others had

the most radical demands of the movement for women's equality, counterpoised rather than trying to combine Marxism against feminism (Zetkin, 1895).

Separatist feminism forms a radical feminism category as it does not tolerate heterosexual relationships. Between men and women the sexual differences are irresolvable, as separatist feminism's proponents argue. The view of separatist feminism is that men cannot positively contribute to the feminist movement and that patriarchal dynamics are replicated by even well-intentioned men (Hoagland, 1997). Author Marilyn Frye (1997) believes that separatist feminism means a separation of male-dominated relationships, roles and activities which operate for the maintenance of male privilege and for the benefit of males. They also describe this separation as being maintained by women (Frye, 1997).

Social classes and ethnic identities are excluded by Western feminists and universalise women's issues (Narayan, 2000), which reinforces homophobia (Mohanty, 1991) and ignores the voices and activities of non-White non-Western women (McEwan, 2001; Mills, 1998). Postcolonial feminists criticise radical and liberal feminism while other feminists criticise Western feminism for being ethnocentric (Mohanty, 1991). Angela Davis and Alice Walker (Walker, 1983) both share this view. In mainstream postcolonial Western feminism, those who are described as postcolonial feminists are those who have reacted against universalising tendencies and lacking attention to gender issues (McEwan, 2001). Multiracial feminism provides a standpoint theory by analysing the women of colour's lives and experiences (Zinn and Dill, 2002).

These perspectives arose from the works of feminists in the third-wave rhetoric arguing that the presentation of lives of women in other spheres was being ignored,



and also that emphasis should be placed on women and their needs by the development process.

Cultures initiated by colonialism, according to post colonialist feminism, are and should be treated differently (Zinn and Dill, 2002; Mills, 1998). The West monitored former colonies for what was considered "social progress" after the formation of the United Nations in the 1940s and '50s. In the developing world since then, the status of women has been monitored by the United Nations Organisations (Mills, 1998). Traditional roles and practices have been taken up by women and could be seen as a form of rebellion against colonial persecution. The glorification of this pre-colonial culture could have been as a result of this oppression, which, in traditions along with gender lines and cultures, could be viewed as the acceptance or the refusal to deal with gender inequality issues (Kramarae and Spender, 2000). Postcolonial feminists imposed by the Western colonisers within their own cultural models of society, struggle to fight gender oppression.

Postcolonial feminism concentrates its actions on the issues such as ethnicity, racism and the enduring cultural, economic, and political consequences of colonialism. It is sometimes known as "Third World" feminism (Bulbeck, 1998). This is related to the non-white non-western women gender realities. There are similarities between the reality of women within patriarchal society and the recently decolonised nations of both post colonialist and postcolonial feminism. In their relationship to the dominant culture, it takes the perspective of a socially marginalised subgroup (Zinn and Dill, 1994). Both black feminism and postcolonial feminism resemble this as they both seek to be recognised by men but in their own culture, and they both respond to racism (Kolawole, 1997).

Postcolonial feminism is also closely connected to transnational feminism. Those forms of feminism which seek to eradicate class oppression and sexism but disregard race, can discriminate through racial bias against many people, including women (Greenwald, 2002). Black feminism, racism, sexism and class oppression are inextricably tied together. The Combahee River Collective in 1974 argued that freedom for all people was the result of the liberation of black women. It would also indicate the end of racism, sexism, and class oppression. A more intense kind of oppression was experienced by the black women than by the white women (Walker, 1983).

## **2.3 Women's Economic Empowerment within the Development**

### **Studies' Debate**

UNIFEM have defined the term 'Women's economic empowerment' as the capability of women to gain access to and control over income on long term basis in order to make a sustainable living standard. "This definition seeks long-term profits in terms of changes to policies and laws which prevent women from benefiting from the development process and is founded on women having access to income on a long term basis. It also seeks to change laws that prevent women from benefiting power relationships at community and household levels" (UNIFEM in Carr, 2000: 2).

In the 1970s when women's empowerment was initially sustained by "Third World" feminists, it asked for a series of changes that had been confirmed only in the 1980s for proactive action rather than structural packages, the maintenance of dependency and lack of gender reform. Nonetheless, women's empowerment was utilised in terms of connections with various systems in the 1990s. There were numerous organisations "mentioning gender equality through a change of social, economic and

political structures as well as difficulties for social justice at national and international levels” (Bisnath and Elson, 2003: 1). The OECD Development Centre survey in 1985 aimed at women a broad sample of development projects and concluded many were too welfare-oriented (Agarwal, 1997).

In the context of microfinance schemes, as explained below, feminists have a broad discourse debating the adequacy of this technique regarding women’s engagement in the empowerment process. Expanded access to and control over money has been gained by numerous women. However, the endorsement additionally shows that the choices and productivity of individual women are “enhanced in the context of withdrawal of state responsibility for broad-based economic and social support also in isolation from a feminist agenda” (Bisnath, 2001: 11).

Bina Agarwal contends that “any system that looks for empowering women might as well upgrade women’s capacity to turn the tide in their interest” (Agarwal, 2001: 7).

Srilatha Batliwala examines how the timeframe between women’s liberation and Freire explains the means through which, gender orientation is built socially and constructs a different plan. Inadequacies that developed the need for intervention were partially attributed to methodologies, which did not distinguish the underlying components that propagate women’s abuse and misuse. Batliwala (1994) suggests that empowerment does not come as a consequence of monetary deprivation since rich women endure home violence too. The procedure of empowerment includes, to start with, women recognising the belief system that legitimises male mastery and following how it sustains their abuse. Batliwala recognises that women have been taking part in their own particular mistreatment and in this way sees outside change factors as vital for empowerment. Women require access to another group of plans and data that updates their knowledge and mental self-view in a way that energises

civil movement (Batliwala, 1994). Empowerment is conceptualised with respect to Stromquist who views empowerment as a socio-political thought that incorporates cognitive, mental, financial and political parts. The cognitive part alludes to women's comprehension of the explanation for their subordination. The mental part incorporates women accepting that they can act at individual and social levels to enhance their conditions. It includes a departure from learned dependency and the advancement of self-regard and confidence. For the financial part the researcher contends that in spite of the fact that work outside the home frequently infers a twofold load, access to such is a significant investment in freedom and autonomy. The political part incorporates the capability to envision one's scenario and assemble for social change in a process that begins at grassroots level and creates a snowball effect on the government (Stromquist, 1995).

Rowlands acknowledges empowerment in the connection of social work and training where advanced models of women's empowerment are related at three levels; individual, close relationships and groups. The model is proposed to be used to distinguish particular issues in every classification suitable to local circumstances (Rowlands, 1997).

For Kabeer, empowerment is a process by which individuals who have been deprived of the opportunity to make their life choices have that capability to get such choice. Kabeer (1999) has examined various investigations of women's empowerment and argues that the capability to practice such decisions is made up of three unified and interdependent components: agency and accomplishments, both of which need consideration before affirmations about empowerment may be made, and also access to the means of production. Assets are distinguished as human and social materials as well as incorporating future desires and claims (Kabeer, 1999).

Agency is the capability to define one's objectives and follow up on them. Ordinarily considered as choice making, agency can likewise include social dealings and transactions, trickery and control, subversion and security (Kabeer, 1999).

Kabeer distinguishes that some social norms such as those determining gender behaviour are part of gender identities, and are gradually developed all through life and, therefore, that minor change cannot easily remove them. However, Agarwal mentions that social norms are not unchangeable, despite the possibility that the timeline for changing such norms may be a long one.

## **2.4 The significance of Women's Economic empowerment in Development Programmes**

Women make up 70% of the world's poorest population, which is consistent with UN measurements (UNIFEM 2004). Moreover, over 50% of the worldwide sustenance supply is prepared by women and 66% of the workforce is constituted by them. However, they earn only 10% of the planet's income and own only 1% of the property (OECD 2011). In mainly Agrarian Economies, the significance of women's roles was also advanced with the lack of development projects with this reality. A core component to poverty reduction is women's economic empowerment (OECD 2011). Successfully addressing the underlying factors that contribute to women's economic empowerment, namely resources which women can draw on to succeed economically such as human, social, physical and financial capital and norms and institutions which govern individuals and their social and economic environment, this can lead to achieving other forms of women's empowerment and sustainable development (ICRW 2011).

Roy and Niranjana (2004) accept that empowerment lies in the ability of women to select choices and control assets which may shape their existence. Women can be empowered only when they can control their own particular livelihoods and assets and have power and agency to exploit chances (Golla *et al.*, 2011).

A special Division for Women in Development was established by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), ensuring that women participate in UNDP projects and promoting concrete action (Joeke, 1987). A number of women in development issues were recognised by the United Nations in the 1980s. Women were called to play an active role both as beneficiaries and as agents. Policies, which should involve women, should include industrialisation, food, agriculture, science, technology, and social development (Weekes-Vagliani, 1985).

Economically empowered women play a central part in poverty reduction and this is supported by the international aid community, which directs towards the efficacious attainment of all the MDG's. The World Bank, OECD and others have carried out various studies and have shown that women are more probable than men to enhance their family's welfare if they have control over their assets as they may use a higher extent of their wages. Financially engaged women have a tendency not only to send their children into education, but also to have fewer children. They are also less inclined to withstand abuse and are capable of designing sustainable solutions (World Bank 2011; UNDP 2007; UNFPA 2006; OECD 2011).

'The social equity view' asserts that women's financial rights are considered as the most important human rights. Empowering women is dependent upon a double contention and is crucial to realising development objectives. Violation of human rights result from women being oppressed on the premise of gender orientation, so empowering women economically is naturally worth seeking as a human

development objective. Female economic empowerment is seen as a form of smart economics which will encourage practical advancement and should be undertaken from numerous worldwide organisations. These have been suggested from an instrumentalist angle (World Bank 2006; OECD 2011). For example, more than 54 per cent of the population in Rwanda are women. Underutilising more than 50 per cent of the nation's potential human capital is wasting this valuable resource and hindering the country's economic development.

The effectiveness of labour dispersion and the profit of labour in families are bought down by gender inequalities and translate, on a national level, into the unequal distribution of assets (World Bank 2010). These inequalities may be resulted from the unpredictable transaction between what constitutes entrepreneurial capital and gender, creating social and socio-financial variables. Gender differences in investment continue even in the countries where gender inequalities in terms of access to monetary resources do not exist. In short, women's proficiency in business reflects their societal position (Sara and Shaw, 2006).

Women's capability to gain an income provides them the right to gain entrance to housing, health services, food, and a livelihood that is free of male oppression. Women's potential is repressed by the discriminatory gender divisions in labour. The instrumentalist view acknowledges the solid perspective of economically engaging women because it allows them to make savings and to invest into sustenance and education. This in turn creates an environment that is equal, fair, and abundant in opportunity and results in better national economic growth.

Doepke and Tertilt developed a theory based on a non-cooperative critical argument of whether women's economic empowerment is truly always advantageous to economic growth family bargaining models. They then challenged the general

assumption that women's ability to control income or other assets produces automatic profits to their families and national economic growth (Doepke and Tertilt, 2011). They broke down the causal links between women's economic empowerment and economic growth. They concluded that certain forms of women's empowerment may not generate automatic positive outcomes to women's families (Doepke and Tertilt, 2011). For example, many studies have demonstrated that a higher ratio of women's income is used on their families' welfare (World Bank 2011; UNDP 2006; UNFPA 2006; OECD 2011). However, gender inequality in the consumption market is frequently not clarified in these study conclusions. Women may contribute progressively in family well-being on the grounds that they are restricted on what they can use their earnings on because of cultural and legal restrictions. Gender equality profits economic development and could be contended to enhance truly human capital. For economic growth, women's economic empowerment may not be a cure-all as inferred by Doepke and Tertilt that though it is important on numerous levels additional systematic research directed to the causal links of women's financial empowerment to development is required.

## **2.5 Gender Relations in the Women's Economic Empowerment**

Gender's definition refers to social norms that differentiate males and females' roles and behaviours, whereas sex is established on biological differences, such as women's ability to conceive (Pearson et al., 2009; Sen et al., 2007; Rowlands, 1996). In Rwanda and other patriarchal cultures, women bear the brunt of the vocation that women are identified as performing better than men in domestic activities. Such a stereotype is socially assigned because there is no reason to assume that men are



not able to care for their family. Similarly, men are identified as suppliers and defenders in such gender constructs and are recognised as the head of the family in many patriarchal societies. The socialisation of gender functions enhances an unequal power dynamics and is recognised as a root source of gender imbalances and gives rise to uneven progress between women and men (Sen et al., 2007).

Social norms define what is socially acceptable for women and men, thereby differentiating male and female needs, rights and commitments in the family unit. Also, women and men limit their capabilities to manage their behaviours and lives to settle on vital decisions due to their socially attributed roles. Gender roles affect our social status and self-esteem, as well as our reaction to our surrounding environment. However, it is fortunate that gender structures can change overtime regardless of how ingrained gender inequalities are into the social order (Martínez et al., 2006). The World Bank acknowledged the existence of strong norms which dictate women's social and economic opportunities despite numerous lawful instruments that are set up to ensure and promote women's rights (World Bank 2011). Social norms solidify the family unit so that laws and policies that are implemented to reduce gender inequality at family level are ineffective because legal institutions often are hesitant to go against societal perceptions.

The UNFPA Rota Fund is one such case where the project serves as a discussion platform for men and women to discuss issues such as violence against women, which is reinforced, and a wage system (CEDAW 2007; UNIFEM 2008). From this method, success has been achieved which mitigates violence against women as both men and women figure out appreciation for one another. For the benefit of family and neighbourhood, the portrayal of women as equal people who can access and control assets was also a positive impact. When there is control from the abuser

over the victimised individual's money and other financial assets, this is classed as 'economic violence'. A qualitative appraisal was carried out by the World Bank over 19 nations and revealed that women acted as an emasculation factor when they were on higher wages than men, so they weren't a positive investment for the family unit (World Development Report 2012). The Rwanda Men's Resource Centre (RWAMREC) revealed the root sources of gender based violence in Rwanda and this was managed across the nation's family units. There can be a negative effect on the family with women's economic empowerment and this was shown by the direct correlation between domestic violence and an increase in women's wages (RWAMREC 2010).

Societal imperviousness to change in developing nations such as Rwanda causes a reluctance to denounce perpetrators of violence against women, and decreases the strategies and genuineness of laws which advocate gender equality. Therefore, for a country's institutions to assess the execution of gender empowerment programmes it is almost not feasible, especially at the family unit level, where a great number of women are active financially, and socially (WDR 2012). Development policy and projects' strategies expect that if resources are available, for example training skills and financial capital, then women will gain abilities of moving forward by themselves. However, disempowering results for women may result in unpredicted outcomes as these methodologies may be in conflict with the social norms. These may also bring about project executors and policy-makers to regularly apply techniques which do not consider societal norms as part of an effort to have a rapid effect on women's lives (Martínez, 2006).

Women's economic empowerment strategies which cause the recurring damages are an expanded workload for women and literature shows that this may result in health issues and a higher danger of domestic violence. Women's capacity to be monetarily independent may be hindered by these determinants.

Microfinance establishment is one frequently noted example of the result of women's economic empowerment and over various national settings, this is also appropriate crosswise. An example of microfinance is if there is access to credit and other budgetary means for the unfortunate, they are then entitled to enhance their family's financial condition and put resources into micro-endeavours. The poor do not have use of financial services and the resources so are, therefore, unable to gain credit from an accepted bank. The main aim of microfinance is thought of as a viable neediness diminishment policy and is seen as a route to improve economies for the unfortunate. Microfinance schemes target women as they tend to use the profit to enhance the everyday life of their families. This has led to a high reimbursement rate of women borrowers (AusAid 2008).

Microfinance may produce a negative effect if gender inequality is continued and the run of these microfinances do not take into account the complexities of gender structures within society. However, microfinance may be an immense significance for women if they are correctly run. A study of microfinance programmes in Cameroon uncovered that loans taken out by women were used on school expenses and enhancing the livelihoods of their families rather than the asset being put into micro-endeavours (Mayoux, 2001). Within the familial unit, since women were able to earn an income, men felt less committed to use their finances. Women were then held accountable for reimbursing the loan with high investment rates and also required to work over extended periods of time to earn more as well as accomplishing their

domestic responsibilities. The wife's additional salary minimised the families' money related obligations and men took advantage of this which gave them disposable cash to use outside of the family unit (Mayoux, 2001).

There may be potential negative effects of microfinance on women. Women will put resources into financial opportunities and may take out an additional loan from an alternative microfinance organisation in order to reimburse the loan. They could then get trapped in a vicious cycle of obligation reimbursement. Due to a consequence of women's involvement in microfinance, domestic violence has been reported on various occasions. Violent behaviour could result as this may encourage disdain from men since women are targeted by numerous microfinances. As result men who may push their wives to take out credit that they would be unable to reimburse, this may create financial uncertainties.

Sufficient information is still needed to measure the achievement of microfinance projects, as it is a new government concept in Rwanda. However, the authority has demonstrated a particular appeal in improving this industry further as this business is developing quickly to help entrepreneurs develop in economically disfavoured regions.

The example above is not directly assessed in Rwanda. However, its importance lies in the need to recognise regularising stipulations and the complexities of launching financial empowerment projects which can have a negative impact on the proposed purposes of these drives. Furthermore, this study's qualitative research findings reveal that the majority of skilled and semi-skilled interviewees cited income and highly patriarchal intra-household relations as the main barriers to women's economic empowerment in Rwanda. Consequently, considering the structural gender inequalities women face in Rwanda will be an important component to the successful realisation of microfinances and other women's economic empowerment

programmes such as cooperative schemes to ensure they do not pose undue hardships on women.

## **2.6 Particular Challenges for Female Empowerment in Post-Conflict Countries**

In order to assure a progressing strategy towards women's economic empowerment in post-conflict countries, trauma would have to be overcome and due to the crisis encountered in the country this is especially applicable to Rwanda. In the chaos of conflict, gender structures are shifted which supply women with new challenges. While men are preparing for war, women accept obligations and professions which were customarily held for men.

Women frequently participate in combat, which increases their power in society. In Rwanda there is significant documentation that women have perpetuated genocide (Prunier, 2010). New constitutions are embraced by numerous post-conflict nations which bring about political, economic and social change as studies have demonstrated. Then again, as post-conflict nations have restricted assets and could experience security issues from both men and women, the use of these changes is regularly complicated since they may drastically counter the previous philosophy on gender roles. There is an eagerness to return to customary practices once again and women's raised socioeconomic and political status throughout conflict may vanish post-conflict. Conversely, the concerns of work for the gender divisions of labour for women's standard may be adjusted. For instance, in Rwanda, the 1994 genocide left the country with a 70 per cent female populace and post-conflict has accelerated a great percentage of female headed households. In parallel to performing their existing domestic activities, women were left with no choice other than to undertake

conventional male occupations. Gender based violence has been known to increase during post-conflict social orders.

Women's increased responsibilities in a family unit decision, throughout conflict, can enhance brutality and domestic violence post-conflict from men, in an attempt to regain their pre-conflict family position (RWAMREC 2010). In a post-conflict study in Mozambique on the advancement of women's rights, the men were found to be impervious to gender equity strategies on the grounds that it debilitated male power in social order and undermined standards and values. Thus an increase in family disputes leading to domestic violence was discovered in post-conflict countries. Men acted as head of the family and tried to recapture their universal status (Sleg and Kimonyo, 2010). Furthermore, post-conflict individuals can develop behaviour of violence due to the traumatic incidents experienced during the conflict (Ward, 2002; Marsh, 2006). For men adhering to newly post-conflict reshaped gender norms may become challenging and they may feel distanced post-conflict. Post-conflict social conversions can experience challenges when reintegrating into the social order. Thus, in order to acquire control over assets or choice making, men might depend on violence against women (Ward, 2002; Marsh, 2006).

Furthermore, during and post-conflict period women live daily the risk of economic, emotional, physical and social harm more than their male counterparts. One of the grisly effects of violence against women is HIV/AIDS. "Many statistics have showed that the resultant effect of extreme poverty and gender inequality in post-conflict countries is women's increased vulnerability to the epidemic HIV/AIDS" (UNDP 2002). The epidemic leaves households and communities as a whole with unbelievable burdens. Frequently women are victims of rape and forced sexual assault and the overall cost to human society and the pain experienced by the victim

is immense. In many developing countries, let alone in the post-conflict nations, healthcare systems are very weak to support HIV/aids patients, home-based care becoming the only option. This care system provides enormous burden to women and girls (Urdang, 2007). Women and girls are required to spend more time while caring for their family members, hence reducing their time spent in earning income activities and schools, leaving them with fewer educational and economic resources (Opiyo, Yamano and Jayne, 2008). Moreover, existing customs, traditional practices, and norms reinforce the propagation of HIV/AIDS in post-conflict situations such as in Rwanda. In fact, cultural influences discourage the use of contraceptives and social constructs that expect women to adopt a submissive attitude diminishes their ability to refuse unsafe sex are possible factors in HIV/AIDS gender disparities. Based on, ethnographic observations, country statistics and conversations with interviewees it appears that the majority of women are directly or indirectly affected by HIV/AIDS in Rwanda.

## **2.7 Chapter Conclusion**

As literature infers, there is lack of vital strategies to address women's economic empowerment. However, on a wide scale, there is an absence of progress which adjusts prior structures in the social order where men and women's roles and behaviours are defined by gender structures. Social empowerment is not gained from the means of women to be financially independent (Abbott and Wallace, 2012; Middleton and Hancock, 2009). If a woman is capable of controlling her assets with the opportunity to procure a livelihood, this can signify that she has the ability to impact family choices. It may not be ideal to accept that women recognise

themselves as oppressed or living in patriarchal social orders. Regardless of the possibility that women tackle all domesticated tasks and might be forced to be compliant by societal forces, they might also live in dread of violence. Women do feel freed by policies or systems that are furnished with access to earnings. Gender structures are changing slowly and are being passed down generationally.



## **Chapter Three: A Historical Overview of Women's Socio-economic Status in Rwandan Society**

### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the current situation of Rwandan women, studying Rwandan historical gender barriers and women's economic status in the post-conflict era. Firstly, it describes the traditional organisational structure of families in the patriarchal African societies. Secondly, the chapter analyses Rwanda's patriarchal culture and its ramification over time on women's development process. The significant understanding of how gender relations have been gradually developed and how they continue to affect women in their economic improvement process will be explored.

Literature agrees that the practice of polygamy, specifically polygyny is one widely known as the characteristics of the African traditional family in different regions. The study of the traditional African family was carried out and concluded that the nature of every African social group was determined by the presence and absence of polygyny (Mair, 1953). This was regardless of tribe, clan or extended family and independent from the leading type of the society, whether matrilineal or patriarchal. Polygyny exists in the traditional African family patterns as it is still widely practiced in Africa. The polygynous family consists of a man, his many wives and their children (Mair, 1953; Stuart et al., 1961). Historical studies conducted during the first half of the century indicated that polygyny was existent in all regions of Africa. As a result of economic evolution (or devolution) there was a decline of the practice. With increasing modern influences and economic uncertainties, an economic burden was created as a result of marrying more than one wife. Ordinary citizens traditionally could not marry more than one wife and usually only men who had wealth, Kings and

chiefs, could afford it. The strength of the society and pattern of social organisation of the traditional African family was determined by polygyny as it set the tone (Goldthorpe, 1984). The traditional family is made up of several nuclear units held in association by a common father (Mair, 1953). Patriarchal structures within the family household includes other relatives of the father such as widowed, younger or unmarried sisters, children of the father who have been sent to be brought up by him and also aged parents. The father remains the head of the nuclear family units, though also included in this same larger household will be female slaves, servants and their children (Coser, 1974).

In African communities, the context of patriarchy and the patriarchal systems amongst them might suggest that individual men have the most dominant social status. The clan chooses the heir and he then assumes control of the inheritance with little regard to the wishes of the dead person. In these tightly knit communities, Salix law does not apply. The successor to the widow adopts the deceased person's children and there is no distinction between his own children and them and so, therefore, adopts the widow's family as an additional family responsibility. Man's rights of inheritance and legal entitlements in matriarchal societies are on his mother's side. The matrilineal line or descent group benefit from social support when they are in debt or with marriage obligations (Richards, 1969). A girl's mother's brother must be consulted first when she is getting married as the male head has the control over all the children of the group. The maternal uncle in many matrilineal societies undertakes all the responsibilities and arrangements for his nephew's marriage. The women's parents are legal guardians of the children in the case of divorce.

### 3.1 Women in the Pre-genocide Era

Generally, family division of labour was impacted on the gender roles in Rwanda. Men's responsibilities were to secure and accommodate the family. They were always considered the head of the family unit, whereas women were regarded as mothers and sustenance providers. Financial, political, health, and social family unit decisions were spouses' responsibility. The senior ancestry heads and the father generally had control over the extreme power of choices that could influence their patriarchal clan, despite the fact that the chief of the family was usually the spouse (Adekunle, 2007).

At an early age, gendered divisions of labour were dependent upon their sex and people would distribute household tasks to their children accordingly (Uwineze *et al.*, 2009). The more difficult yet less physically serious tasks were duties which women performed. Agricultural undertaking duties, such as planting and gathering harvests were mainly women's activities. Men were answerable for having to clear land and care for animals and took part in the designation and supervision of women's activity. No business exercises were to be taken by the women without her spouse's consent and these were the standard laws put in place (Hamilton, 2000). On a patrilineal premise, as land rights were passed down, this increased women's dependency on men. When the husband died, property was passed down to the next family male inheritor (Adekunle, 2007). If a male relative or father died, then qualifications were passed down to a spouse or children with the unmarried women having usufruct rights over the family (Isaksson, 2011).

Marriage was held in high respect and used to upgrade the political, financial and social position of the families in Rwanda, as well as being recognised as a union between a wife and spouse (Adekunle, 2007). Usually, when wedded, a woman was

recognised as a part of the larger family and not just as part of her husband's possessions. The man paid inkwano (dowry) to the woman's family and this is seen as a value of appreciation for the woman's family.

It was illegal, as well as disrespectful, for a wife to call any of her spouse's family by their first name (Adekunle, 2007). In the Rwandan society, childless families were acknowledged as marginalised and children were recognised as an indication of the family's prosperity. A woman's right to divorce her spouse was non-existent. However, a man was allowed to separate from his wife if she was unable to conceive. Polygamous relational unions were frequent because if the first wife could not generate a male next in line, men regularly took a second wife (Pearson *et al.*, 2009).

Within the Rwandan royal family, despite the presence of a few cases of females inheriting some decision-making posts, the majority of women were denied from taking part in decision-making responsibilities. Women were required to comply with male power and an indication of disrespectfulness was to challenge choices about family matters and to talk freely. Acknowledged prudent qualities which might attract a spouse are being docile and to be delicately spoken (Pearson *et al.*, 2009).

A women's economic stability was reliant on obtaining a husband so she could gain access to his land, thus women emulated this cultural ideal in order to garner respect from her community and secure herself, future children and economically.

Within Rwandan culture, there are two aspects to regarding violence against women; one encourages it, whilst the other is against it. For example, a woman was allowed to go back to her family whenever she was subject of violence and was beaten more than once. Nonetheless, customary law stipulates that children have to stay with

their father's family and total parental authority belongs to men, making it hard for a woman to report her abuse. Sexual violence was recognised as a private family matter, which means it was culturally accepted that a man at will, engages in sexual relations with his wife whereas a woman could not refuse (Pearson *et al.*, 2009).

During the colonial era in the social order, ethnic stratification was prompted by colonialists. Religion amplified male dominance over women regardless of their ethnic background. The prejudicial laws were legalised in Rwanda by colonialists and further reinforced in social attributions that women were a lower ranking than men. The Civil Code stated that women were denied from inheriting or owning property or possessions. Males, therefore, had family unit power over accounts and sole parental rights. For women found guilty of adultery, a one-year jail sentence was ordered by The Penal Code, in correlation to men that might be fined 1000 Rwandan Francs, equivalent to \$1.5 USD (UNICEF 1997). In 1962, Rwanda's autonomy supplanted the previous regime of Tutsi totalitarianism with an exceptionally unified Hutu administration.

### **3.2 Women in the Post-genocide Era**

Rapid demographic development, mounting ethnic pressures, changes in coffee and tea prices and the political arena were all variables that expedited the 1994 genocide. Post-conflict women's status went from being acknowledged as part of their spouses' assets to becoming the heads of households. Women were sometimes easy targets of shocking offences by others all through the genocide, and they were also the perpetrators. However it was mostly men who were displaced or

murdered which left the post-conflict nation with a 70 per cent female populace (Powley, 2004).

Women were left with huge obligations from this catastrophe, as they needed to reconstruct the social fabric of social order and to accommodate their families and take the role of their husbands. The women's position in the social order was moved forward in the post genocide era. Priorities for the reconstruction processes were set and the acquired social mobility was seen in control over financial flows.

In the Rwandan social order, gender relations were drastically changed in the devastation of the 1994 genocide. Gender equality is a national necessity, as the government announced. Women constituted 70 per cent of the remaining populace and the rise of women's freedom was central to recognising this.

Government's responsibility to gender change in Rwanda after genocide was a necessity. Women were given equal rights to inheritance, property and equal responsibilities in marriage. The Rwandan Parliament passed the Matrimonial and Succession Law. Within the National Gender Policy key targets are set out to guarantee that all government strategies, public and private sectors are dedicated to upholding gender equality.

In 2006, assault was criminalised and a gender violence bill was passed in parliament, incorporating domestic assault and physical violence of any sort. In September 2013, Rwanda became the first nation on the planet to have reached the milestone of 60 per cent female representation in parliament and picked up worldwide approval (Voice of Africa 2013). Women's empowerment has been shown on a worldwide level in Rwanda by approving various international conventions and treaties such as; the Optional Protocol to the African Charter of People's Rights and to Women's Rights in Africa, the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Beijing Declaration and the East African Community's Development

Framework and Gender (EAC 2009). Moreover, the impact of violence was recognised by Rwanda's International Criminal Tribunal.

For the first time in global history, rape officially became an act of genocide and is now considered a punishable war crime (ADBG 2008). Rwanda's institutional structure has changed to reflect the country's gender programme. Rwanda's National Gender Policy has been brought about by the MGFP and this is answerable for the general announcement of women's empowerment on a national level. The Women's National Committee contributes towards arranging the advancement and execution of gender equality legislation and is accountable for speaking for women's issues. The Forum of Rwandan Women Parliamentarians was made to audit existing laws and to push gender equality in order to guarantee gender awareness (Abbott, 2012)

### **3.3 Chapter Summary**

How women are discerned by others and how they recognise their self-worth has been outlined within Rwanda's indigenous and colonial past regardless of the ideal of gender equality in post-genocide. Women in post-conflict have made some impressive legitimate increases due to government acknowledgement of women, who are now seen as essential members of the country's advancement.

In order to trigger social progressions, make key life decisions and to enhance women's action, then political will is instrumental. Rwandan women played critical roles in mobilising fellow women to live together and in different leadership positions, and also within their country to find common solutions to their own problems. Women have shown themselves to be not only exemplary leaders at community level, but at country level also.

In all spheres of life, possibilities were opened up by the mere presence of women in parliament, cabinet and the judiciary. Women helped to develop confidence amongst other women and they served as role models as their roles in decision-making were increased. The genocide acted as an awakening for all strata of society, launching new perspectives, both in the domestic sphere and the political one. Every programme and project proposal that deal with the issue of women's economic empowerment may comprehensively address gender equality hindrances, and evaluate steps taken to advocate gender balance. Post-conflict reconstruction must place gender issues at the forefront of the country's development projects.

It is inadequate to include women onto advancement programmes, projects or plans. The implementation, execution and assessment programme must dissect and address gender issues, and gender inferred profits and costs. Gender ought to be used to track where assets are apportioned and they have to be checked against gender equality.

Information about women's rights and gender balance should be dispersed substantially by utilising such instruments as school curricula, the media, legislative issues, common social order and promotion. Only if these prerequisites are filled can we start discussing the success of economic empowerment campaigns since the lack of implementation of these measures results in furthering the gender divide and serves only as a deterrent towards achieving gender equality.



## **Chapter Four: Research Methodology**

### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the procedures by which this research was carried out, with a justification for the chosen approach, exploring the practices, methods adopted for the data collection, sampling procedures and the data analysis to achieve the research aim. After a discussion regarding the philosophical paradigm, and the chosen research paradigm for this research project, the aim of this chapter will be also to examine the process of conducting the research and to provide discussion on the viability and validity of the source of data, as well as providing information regarding limitations and the associated ethical issues.

### **4.1 Styles of Research**

Saunders et al. (2003) distinguished the characteristics of a good research such as to make certain that data is systematically collected and interpreted and that there is a clear objective. There are many styles of research such as empirical, constructive, idiographic, constructive, critical, interpretivism and so forth.

### **4.2 Philosophical Paradigm, Research Methodology, Research Method**

#### **4.2.1 Philosophical Paradigm**

Sometimes referred to as research paradigm, a philosophical paradigm is also considered as the philosophy of a specific research. According to Collis and Hussey

(2003), the research paradigm provides the framework, consisting of theories and methods as well as ways to define data, thereby explaining the relationship between data and theory.

A philosophical paradigm represents the totality of essential conventions and academic concept on which academic study and idea expansion rests, as classically defined by Collis and Hussey (2003). According to Collis and Hussey, the concept represents a method that enables the researcher to separate systems from reality and analyse them. Dill and Romiszowski (1997) expand on this adding that the concept enables the creation of a method of knowledge extraction and defines the work method of the researcher in relation to the subject. It sets the tone for further exploration and enables the researcher to define relevant from irrelevant material. Its use orders the researcher's 'data priorities' by enabling the structuring of the data in a format that is sensible to the universal reader. From Easterby-Smith *et al.*'s (1991) point of view, three reasons explain the need of a philosophical paradigm in any research study. The first is to help the researcher in how to define the research design, what sort of evidence is needed, how this evidence will be collected and interpreted, and how it will consist of providing the adequate answers to the research question. The second reason is that it helps the researcher to come out with a research design suitable for a particular study. Finally, a philosophical paradigm helps the creation of designs that may not be necessarily within the researcher's experience (Easterby-Smith *et al.* (1991).

#### 4.2.1.1 Ontology

According to Saunders et al. (2009), ontology deals with the nature of reality. As one of the old branches of philosophy, ontology is a science that is frequently used synonymously with metaphysics (Holden and Lynch, 2004).

Huglin (2003) states that **Objectivism** (also referred to as empiricism, dualism, critical view, logical positivism) and **Constructivism** (also referred to as subjectivism, postpositivism, and interpretivism) form two aspects of ontology.

Whilst in constructivism, knowledge is socially constructed by interaction with our environment, in objectivism knowledge is out there waiting to be discovered, and this is why scientists mainly use objectivism in both their experimentation and observation to give rise to new knowledge.

According to Collis and Hussey (2003), positivism is generally used in natural sciences methods for generating knowledge, while according to Saunders et al. (2009), constructivism is generally used by social scientists to study human behaviour, and accordingly is referred to as social constructivism. Thus, the real difference between objectivism and constructivism is based on how a researcher creates knowledge.

#### 4.2.1.2 Epistemology

Saunders et al. (2009) highlight that epistemology deals with what makes up logical knowledge in a field of research. Referred to as postpositivism, epistemology is much more similar to ontology because both are concerned with knowledge. Whilst Collis and Hussey (2003) state that epistemological belief can be broken up into interpretivism or positivism paradigm, Crotty (2003) however, believes that recently other paradigms such as critical review, feminism and so forth have emerged.

#### **4.2.1.3 Critical Review**

As interpretivism does, critical research, also referred to as the third of the first part of research paradigm formed of interpretivism and positivism, is a philosophy that believes in social reality. However, according to Oates (2006), critical research sees social reality in an objective way, and this can influence the way we understand the world. The main specificity of critical research is that it is designed to modify social reality and encourage emancipation (Niehaves and Stahl, 2006). Myers (2009) views critical and interpretive researches as similar.

#### **4.2.1.4 Interpretivism**

Orange defines interpretivism as research paradigm which views the social world as socially constructed (Orange, 2010). Bryman believes that positivist's intention is to explain the situation whereas an interpretivist would seek to know the social world and the human behaviour (Byman, 2001). Furthermore, interpretivism is believed to be a research philosophy by which a strategy is required for differentiating objects and people in the natural sciences; consequently, it helps the researcher to understand a social action in the subjective way (Bryman, 2001). For Saunders et al. (2009), this research paradigm is needed for the researcher to differentiate human behaviour in his/her role as social actor.

Ontology, epistemology and critical review as philosophical paradigms could not be used for this research because, according to the Bogdan and Biklen (1998); Cohen and Manion (1994) researches, which used these research paradigms, they frequently but not exclusively use quantitative as data collection method and analysis, while interpretivism referred also to as constructivism paradigm often uses

predominantly both quantitative and qualitative as data collection and analysis, which is the case for the study in hand.

#### **4.2.1.5 The Current Research Philosophical Paradigm**

Research, depending on its scope, can be collated through the use of a particular philosophical perspective. This study mostly makes use of the concepts of positivism and interpretivism in its approach, dictated by the use of questionnaires and interviews of a chosen sample, use of observation and documents enabling the gathering of both quantitative and qualitative data. According to Robson, “the quantitative research paradigm has been historically linked to positivism” (Robson, 2011: 20).

The positivist perception is thus used due to the provision of numerical data, which provide the researcher with confidence in a solid output that can be expressed graphically. Furthermore, Halcomb and Andrew (2005) and Cole (2006) regard the positivist paradigm as a concept emerged from the philosophy recognised as a suitable scientific perspective being founded on measurement and truth.

The interpretivist approach, which stems from the analysis made on gender empowerment, enables the analysis of the qualitative results and provides a critical review of theory in relation to the subject.

Furthermore, according to Williamson *et al.* (2002) interpretivists normally use a literature review to generate questions and plan to conduct the research. The interpretivist approach has been adopted because the research topic needs more explorations to determine the main factors that prevent women in Rwanda from benefiting from economic advantages despite clear gender policy in place.

The qualitative method has its philosophical roots in the interpretative paradigm that strengthens the notion of the existence of many truths as well as multiple realities. This kind of paradigm studies the perspectives of the person and environment, which is coherent with social science studies. In addition, according to Cole (2006) the interpretive paradigm is more connected to the methodological research approach that gives a chance to research participants to express their concerns and their views to be heard. Cole continues arguing that qualitative researchers mostly want to discover what people think, how they feel themselves rather than judging about whether such feelings or thoughts are valid or not (Cole, 2006). Thus, for the interpretivists' view, it is impossible to fully understand somebody's behaviour without fully understanding the view of people surrounding him, as well as his perceptions of the world around him.

After a discussion regarding the main concept of the research paradigm, the aim of the next section is to examine the process of conducting the research by identifying the practices, exploring methods of data collection.

#### **4.2.2 Research Methodology**

Among other definitions, Leedy and Omrod (2010) define **Methodology** as the systematic process used to design a research; collect, analyse and interpret data as a means of understanding the phenomena which the research tries to give explanations of and provide the answers to the questions being researched, through the use of existent knowledge. Furthermore, research methodology should be designed in a manner of providing answers to four important questions: What types of data are required, where to find the data, how data is acquired and finally how data has to be analysed (Leedy, 1997). Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (2002) have put

forward a diagrammatic research process, as the visual format which would enable the researcher to plan ahead and maintain the desired approach towards the process.

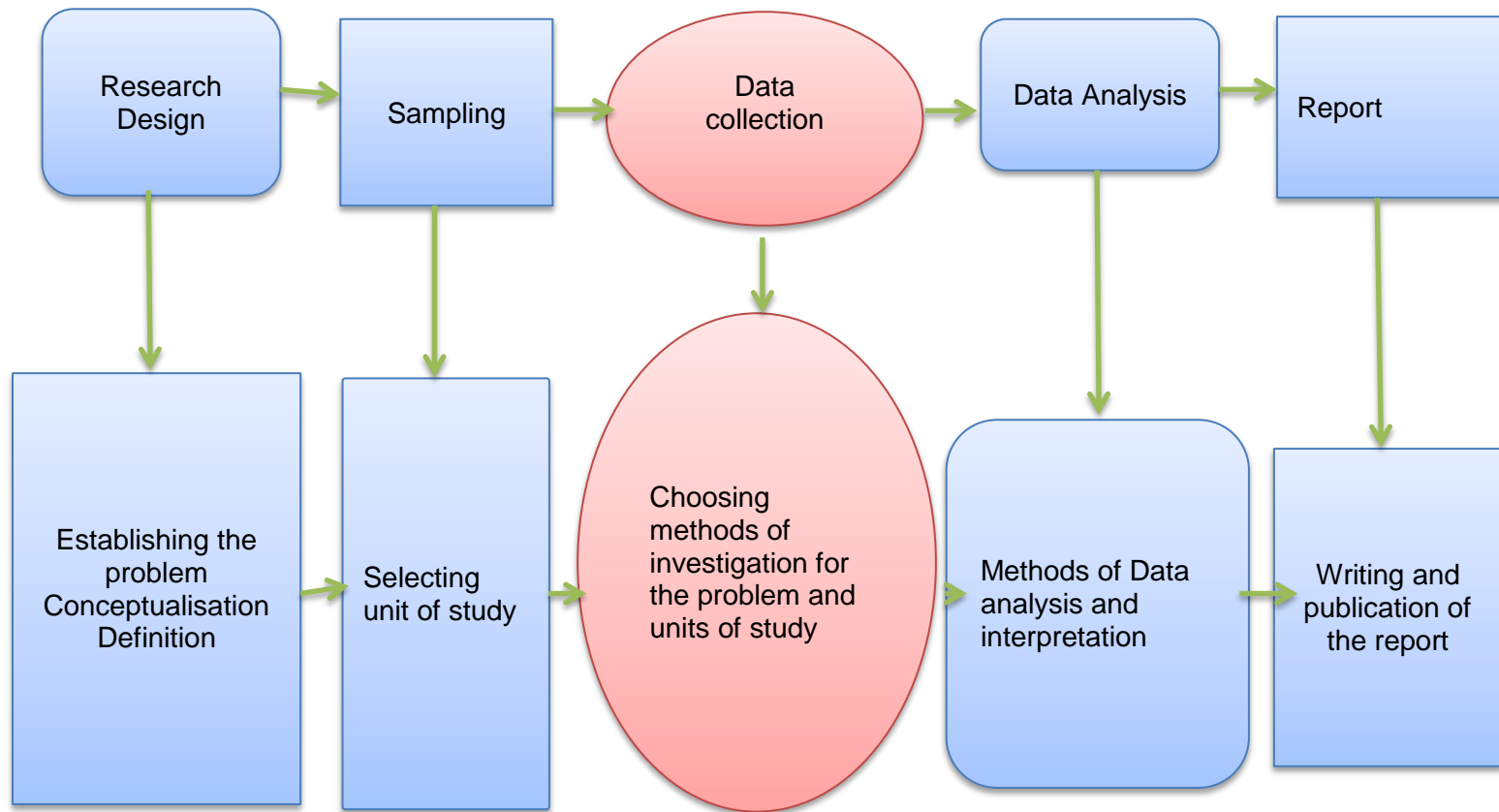


Figure 4.1: Diagrammatic research process (Source: adopted from Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (2002))

### 4.2.3 Research methods

Research methods are represented by the tools used by the researcher during the research process. Jankowicz (2005) defines research method as a systematic approach chosen to collect and analyse data in order to obtain information from these data. The two traditional available social research methods, qualitative and quantitative, enable the researcher to access a spectrum of relevant data that can be processed and used towards defining the conclusion of the study.

The researcher used both methods in the collation of the study, quantitative and qualitative, being combined in order to provide both a scientific and empirical

overview. The complementary roles played by both qualitative and quantitative methods have been acknowledged by Bless, Smith and Kagee (2006).

The reason behind the choice of qualitative and quantitative methods is that both provide an optimal picture and aid towards thorough research (Bryman, 2012).

For the subject at hand, it is believed that the mix of qualitative and quantitative data is beneficial since the presence of only tables, numbers and graphs alone would provide little explanation in regards to the capture of non-numerical data such as opinions, comments and feelings. The qualitative approach's main strength is the ability to study phenomena that are unavailable elsewhere and cannot be captured otherwise (Leedy and Ormrod, 2010). This method was preferred as it has the advantage that it allows the researcher to correlate the research with the target subjects' perceived experiences that are consistent to this thesis (Bryman, 2012). Furthermore, as Kumar suggests, the qualitative method is applied when the study intends to "explore an account of different opinions people have regarding a particular issue, and to describe an observed situation, a problem such as the living conditions of a community" (Kumar, 2014: 16). Thus, the qualitative data collection method was selected for this research because of the aim and objectives of the study. In fact the study is primarily about the effectiveness of the government's gender policies and the magnitude of gender equality within Rwandan society. Conversely, the quantitative approach is systematic in nature and helps towards presenting data in more practical ways (Creswell and Clark, 2010). The approach is relevant to several parts of this study being used both on the theoretical side and during the field research. It was used to evaluate a number of collections of primary information. Given (2008) asserts that the concept refers to the examination of occurrences by using mathematical or statistical methods to create or explore new



research information. The data is made available mostly as arithmetical data, which can be raw and unrefined (as the information gained through the use of questionnaire) or statistical sources (translated in a visual format).

The method enables the scholar to develop a model for the thesis based on a target population, to acquire a sought-after result. While qualitative research enables the gathering of information relevant to the case study, the quantitative method creates data sets which can be interchangeably used in a variety of scenarios.

The use of the quantitative method was prevalent in the research process, as data is easier to collect and organise (Hunter and Leahy, 2008); however, for the given case study a totally quantitative approach would bias the results giving a limited overview of the issue. Since a variety of research methods have been used in the creation of the study, the end result was maintained as an unbiased approach towards the issue. The gathered data was compiled with the aid of statistical tools to provide an insight into the relevant issues. The data was made available in the form of graphs and tables, presenting and analysing women's livelihoods. The reasons for preferring one method over the other comes from the topic, data accessibility, researcher's capability and a relevant sample of population that is feasible for the process (Guba and Lincoln, 2005). A combined research method was used for this study as a relevant reason to produce a well-balanced picture of women's socioeconomic status in Rwanda.

Therefore, conducting field research, using both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods was a peremptory approach to get an intuitional understanding at large scale of how women are affected by government policies. A mix of interviews and secondary sources is a reasonable approach to evaluate the results of post-genocide gender policies since many gender and development experts, as well as government bodies such as Abbott (2010). Rwanda Ministry of Gender and Family

Promotion (2010) and Gender Monitoring Office (2011), have expressed their concerns over the lack of gender reliable data in the country. The methods used in data collection and data analysis are discussed in the sections below.

### **4.3. Data Collection**

In order to provide reliable answers to the research questions, it is imperative to have sufficient and appropriate data through appropriate research methods. Semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, documentation, questionnaires and observation formed a range of techniques employed to gather data for this research project.

#### **4.3.1 Primary Data Collection**

Primary data represents data that has been captured by having direct interaction with the target population. The bulk of the primary data was collected through a wide range of techniques including interviews in the form of semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, observations, self-completion questionnaire, and a thorough analysis of the strengths, weaknesses of policies and programmes implemented by the Rwandan Government to enhance female economic livelihoods.

##### **4.3.1.1 Interviews**

According to Yin (2009) interviews are mainly based on the exchange of information from semi-structured discussion and possess a prearranged objective because they are planned, structured and controlled by the interviewer. In the case of a descriptive and exploratory research, which is the case in the current research, Yin (2009)

proposes that field studies consisting of in-depth interviews should be the suitable research strategy. Furthermore, data collected from interviews and a self-completion questionnaire is new in nature and this is considered to be original in character (Kothari, 2006).

For this research the purpose of the interviews and focus group discussions was to obtain a variety of views on the opportunities and challenges of women's economic empowerment, utilising a fairly open framework to permit a focused but conversational interaction with people from different backgrounds that interacts with the population at different levels.

In addition, semi-structured interviews and focus groups discussions are fundamental to make interviewees feel comfortable when expressing their opinions in their own terms; this is the reason why the interview questions were open-ended, as Yin (2009) suggests that open-ended interview questions give the opportunity to the interviewees to explain their views. Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussion were initially conducted with 20 individuals and 9 cooperative members grouped into 3 different cooperatives with 3 individuals each (see appendix 5 and 6) between January 2013 and February 2013 and between April 2013 and May 2013.

The interview questions are contained in appendix 2. The maximum time of the interview duration was 1 hour 45 minutes with the minimum being 45 minutes. The interviews have been conducted in the 3 languages used in Rwanda: Kinyarwanda, English and French, this being facilitated by the researcher's knowledge of these languages along with a local female research assistant recruited to take notes during interviews. The sample was represented by women and men from rural and urban environments from legal and financial institutions, academics, different development agencies, cooperatives and other women's associations, students, parliamentarians,

entrepreneurs and farmers. This method was used as it is flexible, allowing the acquisition of required information in regards to the impact of the government's reforms on women's economic livelihoods. The interviews were not tape-recorded, instead the researcher was assisted by a local female note-taker while conducting interviews, and the interviews were transcribed afterwards. For the purposes of controlling bias and in order to produce reliable data, as suggested by Sauder et al. (2009), the transcription was made on the same day and the transcript summaries were sent to the participant to check the validity (See table below of interview and focus group discussion participants).

#### 4.3.1.2 Interviews and Focus Group Discussions: background of participants

Participants from different social economic backgrounds were considered for 29 interviews of which 3 focus group discussions were conducted (See appendix 5 and 6).

**Table 4.1: Participants' Background**

PARTICIPANT NO	PARTICIPANT AGE GROUP	PARTIICIPANT GENDER	SECTOR OF ACTIVITY	CODE	WORK EXPERIENCE
<b>SKILLED PARTICIPANTS</b>					
PARTICIPANT 1	31-40	F	BANK	BA1	5
PARTICIPANT 2	41-50	F	EDUCATION	ED1	8
PARTICIPANT 3	26-30	F	NGO	NG1	4
PARTICIPANT 4	31-40	F	DECISION-MAKING	DM1	4
PARTICIPANT 5	31-40	M	DEVELOPMENT PLANNING	DP1	6
PARTICIPANT 6	41-50	F	BUSINESS	BUS	11
PARTICIPANT 7	26-30	F	MEDIA	MED	4
PARTICIPANT 8	31-40	M	EDUCATION	ED2	7
PARTICIPANT 9	31-40	F	DECISION MAKING	DM2	5
PARTICIPANT 10	31-40	F	DEVELOPMENT PLANNING	DP2	6
PARTICIPANT 11	26-30	F	NGO	NG2	5
PARTICIPANT 12	26-30	F	HEALTH	H	4
PARTICIPANT 13	41-50	F	DECISION MAKING	DM3	6
PARTICIPANT 14	31-40	F	DECISION MAKING	DM4	4
PARTICIPANT 15	31-40	F	DECISION MAKING	DM5	6
PARTICIPANT 16	31-40	F	DECISION MAKING	DM6	3

SEMI- SKILLED PARTICIPANTS					
PARTICIPANT 17	26-30	M	COOPERATIVE	COP1A	3
PARTICIPANT 18	26-30	F	COOPERATIVE	COP1B	3
PARTICIPANT 19	31-40	F	COOPERATIVE	COP1C	1
PARTICIPANT 20	41-50	F	COOPERATIVE	COP2A	2
PARTICIPANT 21	41-50	M	COOPERATIVE	COP2B	4
PARTICIPANT 22	26-30	F	COOPERATIVE	COP2C	3
PARTICIPANT 23	41-50	F	WOMEN ASSOCIATION	WAS1	18
PARTICIPANT 24	26-30	F	WOMEN ASSOCIATION	WAS2	4
PARTICIPANT 25	31-40	F	COOPERATIVE	COP3A	4
PARTICIPANT 26	41-50	F	COOPERATIVE	COP3B	3
PARTICIPANT 27	31-40	F	COOPERATIVE	COP3C	1
UNSKILLED PARTICIPANTS					
PARTICIPANT 28	50+	F	INDEPENDENT FARM	INDPF	11
PARTICIPANT 29	31-40	F	PETTY TRADE	PT	8

#### 4.3.1.3 The different responses between important traits of participants

Based on the interviews and focus group discussion responses (see Appendices 7 and 8) two important traits of participants emerge which affected their views and position vis à vis empowerment. Firstly, there was a difference in responses between those in urban and rural areas. For example, female participants from the urban area were aware of the government's laws and policies implemented to protect women's rights and enhance their economic status, such as gender based violence law, inheritance and land law and others, whereas participants from rural areas, in focus group discussions, were confused about government projects that aim to support women. For example, their awareness of the government's gender laws and policies is solely based on their recognition of the improvement of women's rights. According to them, the government's policies promote gender equality without mentioning any specific law or policy implemented to enhance their economic status or to protect their rights. Furthermore, urban participants view patriarchal attitudes, lack of power and agency, and the burden of double work for women as the challenges facing

women in their economic empowerment process, whilst women from rural environments consider lack of resources, violence against women and early pregnancies as their main challenges for their economic empowerment. In addition, women from rural areas argue that the continuing gender inequality is due to the fact that men and women at local level are not sensitized enough on gender equality.

Secondly, women participants from rural and urban areas consider the government support to women as inadequate, whereas men from both areas consider the government's policy towards women's empowerment as adequate and enough for women to be economically empowered.

#### **4.3.1.4 Survey**

The other portion of the primary data collection process was the completion of a survey questionnaire. The survey questionnaires form a technique widely used for quantitative data collection. As acknowledged by Galliers (1992), survey questionnaires make an important tool of looking at more variables than may be possible when choosing experimental approach, because they come up with reasonably correct descriptions of the real situations from many points of view. However, survey research presents many drawbacks.

The major drawbacks of survey questionnaires have been identified to be the simplicity of the given answers, and the problem of respondents who are unmotivated or unreliable leading to errors in the process that have to be eliminated statistically. There is also an issue with the creation of a halo effect that does not reflect the true depth of the identified issues. The use of acquaintances and uncomfortable socio-economic questions can bias the result. There are also issues arising from the questioned person due to self-deception, perception of the issue and

other biases. Respondent literacy levels play a key role since questions can be misinterpreted or translation can be misadjusted. Another factor is fatigue in cases where the questionnaire is long; also a problem in the climate as a suitable area has to be set up to assure the comfort of the interviewees under all circumstances.

Self-completion questionnaires along with informed consent forms and information leaflets (see appendix 1, 3 and 4) were distributed to 105 individuals between January 2013 and February 2013 and again between April and May 2013. Participants were requested to attribute points to the elements of the questionnaire (from 1 to 4; 1 as the lowest and 4 as the highest points), according to the participant's perception.

The questionnaire makes use of 11 questions in total, grouped into 2 sections of which one refers to the collection of general information about the respondent. While the second is formed of selected questions referring to the following topics: the respondents' knowledge of gender barriers and gender equality in the country; challenges to women's economic empowerment; and their perception on the government's responses to gender equality and women's empowerment.

Due to the fact that the responses to the questionnaire are coming from the participants' perceptions, if for example participants feel that their perception on a particular element of the questionnaire is low (not known), then that element is given one point. If the perception is intermediate (known), the element is given two points and three and four points depending on if the participant's perception is high (well known) or very high (very well known) respectively. For a questionnaire's element to score 100 per cent points, that element has to receive four points from each of 76 participants ( $76 \times 4 = 304$  points).

The questionnaire was self-administered in order for the researcher to give more explanation about the research's aim and objectives, as well as to clarify the unclear questions. As Taylor-Powel and Herman (2000) suggest, despite the fact that self-administered means may be expensive, a survey is most needed due to the fact that the questions are answered by the people themselves. Skilled and semi-skilled categories were targeted within the questionnaire as it was designed by providing close-ended and Likert scale style questions for self-completion. However, there was the opportunity to add more information within the questionnaire if the respondent chose to add comments. The choice for a Likert scale style and closed-ended questions has been dictated by the fact that it is quicker, easier and cheaper than any of the other methods (Bryman, 2008; Cohen *et al.*, 2007).

#### **4.3.1.5 Survey Response Rate**

A total of 105 questionnaires were distributed to different participants across Eastern and Southern provinces and the capital of Kigali, as indicated above. Altogether 84 questionnaires were returned completed which represents an 80 per cent response rate, of which 8 (9.50 cent) had some missing information. Thus, 76 (90.50 cent) full questionnaires were considered. Different reasons behind the non-completion were either the fear of data protection or a simple misunderstanding. Content analysis and descriptive statistical methods were used to analyse data from questionnaires, using tables and charts to reflect details of the dataset.

#### **4.3.1.6 Survey Respondent's Background**

Firstly, the questionnaire provides brief information regarding the respondent's background in order for the data to be in a meaningful context. Tables 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4 provide an overview of the respondent's backgrounds as provided in the completed questionnaires.



**Table 4.2: Age group**

Age group (years)	Number (N*)	Percentage (%)
20-25	10	13
26-30	21	28
31-40	23	30
41-50	16	21
>50	6	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>100</b>

N\*=76: number of respondents fully completed the questionnaire

**Table 4.3: Gender**

Gender	Number of respondents	Percentage (%)
Female	48	63
Male	28	37
<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4.4: Sector of activity**

Sector of activity	Number	Percentage (%)
Commerce	10	13
Community development	11	15
Communication	4	5
Decision making	7	9
Education	20	26
Financial Institution	10	13
NGO	8	11
Women's association	6	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>100</b>

The results show that the respondent's age groups range between 20 and over 50 years and they come from a variety of working sectors such as financial institutions, women's associations, education, commerce, and so forth.

The majority of the respondents come from the education sector, while the majority of the respondents were between 26 and 40 years old. This is explained by the fact that due to the high number of genocide deaths, the Rwandan population remains relatively young and the education sector absorbs the majority of those working in formal employment.

#### **4.3.2 Other Data Collection Methods**

The use of documents and observation were among other data collection methods in addition to interviews and questionnaires. According to Denscombe (2007), not only does a case study approach provide to the researcher a possibility to use different sources and data as well as different methods in the research process, but also it allows the use of observation of events and the combination of documents referred to in the aim of the research. As for the examination of institutional reforms and other government's gender policies, many Rwandan development programmes such as the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy, the Rwanda Vision 2020 programme, the Rwandan constitution and other gender reforms such as the Marital and Inheritance law, Land law, labour and family codes were analysed in detail in order to determine whether there are discrepancies within policies and literature.

#### **4.3.3 Secondary data Collection**

The secondary data was collected from various sources including, library journals, newspapers and publications relevant to women's economic empowerment, information from United Nations and other international financial institutions which

are involved in supporting sustainable development in Rwanda such as the IMF, World Bank and other UN agencies such as UNDP, International Women's organisations, Rwandan women's associations, the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR) and finally different ministries dealing with female issues in Rwanda. These sources are relevant to the topic involving limits set in the objectives, by mentioning the existing relationship between political philosophies, feminism and development in order to collate a powerful theoretical foundation on which the project can be based.

A literature review represents an opportunity to identify research methodologies and build knowledge by researching the topic and so is relevant to the project and seminal works. It helps to refine the research question by articulating the knowledge gap and asserting its pertinence to the field in accordance to the given layouts. It also helps to focus on providing the intellectual context for the study. Its presence also ensures a person will not be reproducing technical errors or replicating existing knowledge. Since a researcher's network is a valuable resource, the process also helps to identify other researchers in the field. Hegel (1989) recommends that before its introduction in the study, there requires some importance and a classification of the reliability of the material used. The distinctive contribution the research will make is identified in the review, with justification and a rationale for the study. It also represents an opportunity to aid towards a better study by learning how research findings are discussed and presented in the discipline area. However, in the literature review the works of other people are compared and assessed while the study has to be filled with the researcher's objective analysis.

## 4.4 Sampling

The process by which a unit of observation is selected amongst a large number of individuals is defined as sampling. A sampling where the unit of observation is selected because of its convenience accessibility and proximity to the research is called convenience sampling, whereas purposive sampling is based on gathering reliable units of observation to obtain perceptions and views of the whole population (Ary *et al.*, 2010). An area of considerable confusion for researchers is the sampling for qualitative research in the deductive model. The aim of the misunderstanding of the qualitative approach is related to here, where it is more important for an improved understanding of complex human issues than the generalisation of results. This research used a sample of people who are purposely and conveniently sampled because of their proximity and subject knowledge. The majority of economic development organisations and government offices are based in capital Kigali and this is where the bulk of the interviews took place. In an effort to obtain a representative sample of urban and rural participants, interviews and focus group discussions were carried out in Rwanda's other two provinces: Gisagara and Butare in the Southern Province; Rwamagana and Ngoma in the Eastern Province (see Figure 4.2). Furthermore, in order to determine if there were discrepancies in economic barriers amongst women according to their regional location, the three geographical areas were selected according to their level of poverty. In fact, according to the 2012 National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda report on the evolution of poverty from 2000 to 2011 by Province based on the household survey, Kigali was the least poor province whereas poverty was highest in the Southern Province. The Western Province was the second poorest, and the second least poor Province was the Eastern Province. At the district level, in 2010/11 two districts of Kigali City and Musanze in the north were classified as least poor along with

Rwamagana district in the Eastern Province, whilst Ngoma its neighbouring district has had the highest poverty rate in the Eastern Province (Republic of Rwanda 2012).

Initial contact with women and men came from cold calls or emails I sent to different parliamentarians and targeted economic development NGOs such as Duterimbere Asbl. As I made contacts and interviewed participants, new connections were made which snowballed into gaining access to a diverse range of women and men. Cooperatives are the favoured poverty reduction strategy of the Rwanda Government; hence, the focus group discussions were with female and male cooperative members.

To determine whether there were potential significant gaps within women's socioeconomic livelihoods the participants were selected from diverse educational and socioeconomic backgrounds. As a means of achieving this project aim, the interviewees were divided into three categories; namely skilled (16 participants), semi-skilled (11 participants) and non-skilled (2 participants) groups. Skilled participants are defined here as those who have achieved an educational level beyond secondary school or who have acquired a professional training or are working in a formal sector such as academics, NGO staff, journalists, academics, parliamentarians and other decision-makers, students and diverse professionals. Semi-skilled participants are classified as those with limited professional training skills and/or a secondary school as educational level.

These mainly include women working as small entrepreneurs, in cooperatives or in other female associations. As for the non-skilled category, this is a group of participants lacking any formal education or with primary school as their highest educational level, predominantly working in informal sectors, especially in dependant non-farm activities such as petty trade, crafts or in independent farms.

**Figure 4.2: Administrative Map of Rwanda (Nations Online 2014)**

This map has been removed

## **4.5 Ethics**

The ethical issues of propriety, misapprehension, and objectivity may be raised in research that involves human subjects (Leedy and Ormrod, 1989). The primary data collection did not target the defined vulnerable populations such as the population under 18 years of age and old people. This complied with the Coventry University ethics policy. Furthermore, the researcher collected no sensitive personal information. Anonymity and confidentiality from the code of conduct were observed. With the assurance of confidentiality and the guarantee of anonymity, the research data instruments do not show any name of the participants. The information does not

carry any of the names of the respondents when made public or allow the link of the information with a particular respondent (Sarantakos, 2005). Rogelberg (2008) asserts that ethics is important in protecting the psychological integrity of the subject, by not raising awkward or negative emotion and obtaining an unbiased response. In order to guarantee anonymity and confidentiality, participants were categorised according to their sector of activity and given a letter followed by a number. For example, development planning was given the code (DP), if there were 2 respondents from this category, the participants were given the letter DP followed by a number. Hence the development planning will be recognised by DP1, DP2. Furthermore, the face to face interviews were not recorded as the researcher's sufficient knowledge of four languages used in Rwanda: Kinyarwanda; French; English and Swahili allow him to fully understand the participant's point of views, thereby avoiding misinterpretation from the note taker while interviewing participants. There was no participant's name in the notes or questionnaires; instead, participants were recognised by letters and numbers representing their functions.

## **4.6 Analysis**

Qualitative data is used to establish the relations between various data and analysed using the patterns and themes, hence the generation of new ideas. To develop or confirm new theories in the process of converting it into new knowledge, interpreting raw data is a process of data analysis (Thorne, 2000). Statistical methods have been used to analyse quantitative data and the responses to the questionnaire have been treated individually. As a tool for the statistical analysis processes, Excel has been used. The qualitative data has been used in the triangulation approach for the quantitative data and analysis of the statistical method. This research is about women's socio-economic status in Rwandan society, hence the data was analysed

in line with their support from the government, their economic empowerment, and constraints preventing them from benefiting from diverse economic opportunities.

During the analysis, data preparation is primary as it involves examining or noting the data, checking the data for accuracy, inputting the data onto the computer, transforming the data from primary values to visual representations, as well as developing and documenting a database structure that integrates the various research measures undertaken.

The use of descriptive statistics is primarily used to describe the elementary features of the data in relation to women's socio-economic issues in Rwanda. The process provides summaries about the sample and measures, collating the indicators of the population on a certain issue. Together they form the basis of the quantitative analysis of data with simple graphics analysis. The researcher describes what the data shows with descriptive statistics and the investigation questions, models and hypotheses are shown with inferential statistics.

From inferential statistics, the conclusions drawn through qualitative means extends beyond the immediate data alone, as exemplified through qualitative means, the use of inferential statistics being used to assert what the sample population thinks. Otherwise, inferential statistics can be used to make judgments of the probability that an observed difference between groups is prevalently visible.

The organisation benefits from the size of the collated primary numerical data interpreted into summary tables and graphs. The analysis section only shows the most relevant information and makes use of these techniques. The researcher links each data set with the hypotheses raised in the introduction and also to the interpretation of the specific research question. Another task after a review process is to note any models that were tested and emerged as part of the analysis (Tomkin, 2006).



## 4.7 Limitations

As Yin (2009) supports, taking a single case study as a research model and generalizing its results may seem to be difficult, nevertheless, a unique case study possesses benefits in its internal validity.

While field research is a powerful method for acquiring reliable information, it does pose several significant challenges. When compared to secondary data collection, primary data is more expensive to gather since there is a great deal of the researcher's involvement and expense in preparing and carrying out field research. The correct collection of primary data requires the development and execution of a research plan to assure that time constraints are met. In order to reach a conclusion, primary research is more time consuming as a large amount of data has to be processed. Some research projects with enough potential for offering information that could prove quite valuable to the scientific process are not within the reach of a researcher.

However, regardless of the exposed constraints, due to the lack of research in the topic the researcher feels that it is the ideal method of obtaining relevant information. Lull (1990) mentions interviewing as a difficult method to employ outside of a familiar environment for a proportion of interviewees as the technique relies on the interviewer to enable an objective interview to be undertaken.

The interviewer dictates the response of the other persons through body language, mimic, and tone. Behavioural restraints have to be applied in order for the interviewer to avoid modifying the objectivity of the interviewee. The technique is extensively used in television and has proven effective for this field, being used for a variety of research used in different domains. The interview can provide valuable data for research as opposed to using other methods. Likewise, "interviewing

provides an opportunity for combining practical, analytical and interpretative approaches" (Jensen and Jankowski, 1991: 223), a parallel can be obtained for the research process.

The level of literacy of the respondents might vary, but the deployment of several languages can greatly aid the research process as the prevalence of these local and international languages can eliminate the communicational bias.

In fact research results may be jeopardised due to translation leading to misinterpretation, the sensitivity of the issue can lead to different reactions amongst the interviewees, although norms have been adhered to in relationship to existing standards. For this project the communication bias was avoided thanks to the researcher's capability to perfectly use the four languages utilised in Rwanda, namely Kinyarwanda, English, French, and Swahili.

Furthermore, the position of the researcher, a male, and a foreign academic interviewing woman may have had a negative effect on research results as respondents can be intimidated resulting to suspecting the researcher, thus distorting the data.

Fortunately, a local female was hired at any location visited making interviewees comfortable and ready to freely provide their opinions. Likewise, asking participants to express themselves on issues related to the functioning of government in a country where freedom of expression is limited could lead to participants being selective about the information they provide, especially in the presence of a local person who may disclose the given information.

Some participants who seemed reluctant gave the researcher a second interview appointment with the condition to conduct the interview without the research assistant. Furthermore, due to traditional norms, the researcher did not directly ask

some questions such as those related to gender violence and sexual harassment. However, some of the skilled participants were happy to discuss about the issue.

The disadvantages of the questionnaires have been mentioned above, the main limitation of the study being research bias which can be dictated by a variety of factors. The scientific literature requires readers to critically and independently review it and avoids suboptimal or potentially harmful treatments from research bias. Essential for the practice of evidence-based research is a thorough understanding of bias and how it affects study results. During identification of the study population, selection bias may occur. The ideal study population is clearly accessible, defined, reliable and at increased risk to change the research outcome (Pannucci and Wilkins, 2010).

Another major limitation was financial constraints. Due to the financial limitations, the researcher was not able to conduct a field research in 4 provinces as initially planned. However, the use of survey questionnaire has more or less overcome the problem, and the researcher managed to obtain information sought to meet the study aims and objectives.

## **4.8 Chapter Summary**

This chapter has been dedicated to understanding the mechanism used in the creation of the study. It covered the research methodology, explored qualitative and quantitative methods and explained the use of qualitative method as a method that focuses on the phenomena that are happening in natural settings while quantitative method is used to deal with numerical data.

The rigour with which these philosophical and scientific methods were applied dictated the outcome of the study as proven by the identified limitations. However, a

critical perspective on the issue, as well as the presence of numerical sets, enabled the researcher to attain the set aims and objectives. The chapter describes why both quantitative and qualitative methods were preferred to collect primary and secondary data to enhance the subject knowledge.

Convenience sampling was the sampling technique chosen due to the proximity and convenient accessibility to the researcher. Purposive sampling was chosen because it consists of selecting the units of observation which are judged as being typical of the population which the researcher is interested in.

The adherence to ethical principles has been repeatedly expressed, the target population's liabilities being limited.

Finally, the limitations have been mentioned as financial constraints as well as potential result bias from both survey questionnaire and interview participants. It has been noted that the researcher managed to use all necessary means to reduce these limitations and produce plausible results.

## **Chapter Five: Research Findings and Data Analysis**

### **5.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the research's findings and data analysis. The results of the data analysis are discussed in relation to the literature review, secondary and primary data. The post-conflict gender reforms and survey's data, as well as the qualitative data obtained through different interviews, focus group discussions and observations are being analysed in relation to the effectiveness of post-conflict gender reforms on women's economic empowerment in Rwanda.

The data was collected and analysed in relation to the aims and objectives: to explore the dimension of women's empowerment and its associated issues; to examine the historical gender barriers in Rwanda; to explore post-conflict gender reforms and to evaluate the challenges and impacts arising from the government's reforms to achieve women's economic empowerment in Rwanda. This chapter begins with a critical analysis of the post-conflict gender reforms. The first section starts with an examination of property rights, marriage, and family and inheritance laws. Gaps in these laws, passed in recent years, prevent women from access to land and resources in an equitable manner. The reproductive rights that inhibit economic opportunities and women's health will be illustrated in this section. The decentralisation policy designed to involve women in participating in decision making at the local level, where major development projects' decisions are made, are analysed in section two. The country's economic platforms include gender as a crosscutting issue. However, this chapter demonstrates that these economic

strategies do not take into account some constraints specific to women, and this has created gaps in the division of professional employment, unequal wages and gender inequalities in the labour market as well as the uneven number of men and women working in the informal sector.

The cooperative model chosen by the government as an effective means to improve women's economic status does not provide an adequate contribution to the economic improvement of women due to the inequitable distribution of work and differences in the intra-household dynamics. The chapter then analyses the economic limitations of women caused by gender-based violence due to patriarchal practices of Rwandan society, despite government efforts to reduce gender-based violence in the country. The chapter concludes with the perceptions of the post-conflict gender reforms as well as the government gender equality programmes shown by the research.

## **5.1 Post-genocide Reforms and their Impact on Women's Economic Empowerment**

The Rwandan Government has stated that gender should occupy an important place in all development programmes and any law and institution must be designed and implemented taking into account the gender question as a crosscutting issue. As explored in chapter three, through the post-conflict reforms formulated by the Rwandan Government, the legal rights of Rwandan women have been significantly improved. However, inequalities continue to plague many Rwandan women.

The purpose of this section is to explore how these reforms contain gender inequalities, and critically evaluate their impact on the women's economic improvement.

### **5.1.1 Property Rights, Marriage, Family and Inheritance Laws**

In a country where agriculture is the main economic activity for 78 per cent of the population (Republic of Rwanda: EICV3 2012), and more particularly in a country emerging from a major crisis like Rwanda where a greater number of women still head households, women must have an equitable access to land and property in order to be able to begin a discussion about their economic empowerment.

Now, 20 years after the war, more than 34 per cent of households are headed by women in Rwanda (Republic of Rwanda: EICV3 2012). Due to the high density of population and the fact that for much of the population economic power is based on agricultural production, and with land becoming scarce, the equitable sharing of resources and land in particular is essential to achieve the objective of the economic empowerment of Rwandan women.

In recent years, the legal rights of the Rwandan women have been significantly improved by implementing land policy for example. However, although considerable efforts have been observed, inequalities persist between men and women in land distribution, mainly due to the gaps in the preconditions that govern land ownership, which in general exclude women (Spencer, 2009). In addition, the persistence of traditional patriarchy does not help poor women in rural areas in the marriage process. In fact, the now compulsory mixing of "traditional" wedding ceremonies and

“formal” wedding registration make it too expensive for families who already lack financial resources.

Undoubtedly, the establishment of a gender policy was an important step in the process of improving women's rights. The property and family inheritance law and the land law, both of which prohibit gender discrimination, constitute legal grounds for all women and men in the country. However, many gaps within these reforms inhibit their effectiveness.

As discussed in the literature review, traditionally in Rwanda as land rights were passed down this increased women's dependency on men. In the case of the husband dying, property was passed down to the next family male inheritor (Adekunle, 2007). Moreover, as discussed in the subchapter regarding the particular challenges for countries emerging from a major conflict, post-conflict nations embrace new constitutions with many laws and policies that seek for political, economic and social change (see Chapter 2.6). However, the implementation of these laws and policies is difficult due to the fact that most of the post-conflict nations have restricted assets and could drastically counter the previous philosophy on gender roles based on patriarchal structures.

#### **5.1.1.1 Family, Marriage and Inheritance Laws**

Firstly, the Succession Act specifies that to be legally recognised a child must be born from a civil marriage of his parents (Pottier, 2006). Consequently, not only does the law exclude many children whose parents are not legally married, but also it does not protect those many women who have not been lawfully registered, either because they have completely disregarded the importance of civil marriage or who,



due to financial constraints, cannot afford the ceremonies surrounding these weddings (Spencer, 2009). Indeed, many Rwandans are resistant to change preferring to continue with traditional marriage ceremonies (still organised by many Rwandan families), who consider this practice as their cultural heritage. There is a perception within Rwandan families that giving dowry "inkwano" and organising a big party after the wedding constitutes a social obligation. The organisation of three types of ceremonies during weddings, namely traditional, civil and religious marriages, followed by a substantial celebration, and then in addition registration fees, represents a huge burden for families who consequently prefer to continue with the "illegal" marriages.

Furthermore, some marriage and reproductive constraints continue to limit women's abilities in their process of their socio-economic empowerment. Although unmarried women possess the same rights as male heads of household under the revised Rwandan Civil Code (Pottier, 2006), traditional practices continue to have a stranglehold on the implementation of certain laws, especially at local level. This limits women's mobility and hinders their freedom to choose marriage and reproductive decisions. For example, some sections of civil code in Rwanda give the impression of having been designed on patriarchal bases. Article 206 of the Civil Code stipulates that where there is an official marriage, the husband is legally recognised as head of the household (Pottier, 2006).

The basis of this legislation is to recognise the man as the protector and provider of the family; therefore, parental authority belongs to him as head of the household. Similarly, Article 83 of the civil code states that a married woman must live in the house of her husband (Pottier, 2006). These two articles illustrate how certain laws, influenced by patriarchal practices, discriminate against women both in considering

them as inferior to men, but also by limiting their mobility and ability to make their own choices.

Other laws have been revised with the intention of promoting women's empowerment. However, they have proved to be detrimental for women because they have been designed with no gender equality on them; at the same time those laws are inconsistent with other reforms initiated a few years later, such as the law on inheritance and property rights. For example, except in cases of rare circumstances such as a pregnancy where the judge may exceptionally authorise an early marriage, the legal age of marriage passed from 18 to 21 in 1992 (The African Child Forum 2011). The main idea behind the revision of the law was to limit withdrawals from school by many young women, who would leave school to get married at this young age. Another assumption was to alleviate fertility rates, which would allow women to focus on income-generating activities, and limit the country's population density. What people behind the design of this law omitted to predict is the potential ramifications of this legislation on women. Indeed, by imposing a minimum legal age of marriage, young men and women have shifted towards considering illegal unions, with subsequent consequences for women including losing the rights of family property acquired during cohabitation, according to the law of marriage and property rights (Pottier, 2006). The following sections will demonstrate that high proportions of women are working in the informal sector or in non-remunerated domestic activities, which makes it difficult to assess their financial contribution in the households. In these circumstances, women become particularly at risk of losing any part of the household's assets and resources on the day they decide to separate from, or after the death of their husbands.

Another element that demonstrates the consequences of the woman not being able to define her reproductive choices and which limits her in the economic

empowerment process is the restriction on the use of contraceptives. According to the unofficial information obtained through many discussions with “old people”, women should wait for the wedding before engaging in sexual activity. The legal age for taking contraceptives was fixed at 21 years, yet more than 20 per cent of 18 year old girls have already had sexual intercourse (DHS 2010). Refusal to allow young women protection against possible non-desired pregnancies, and additionally the culture of the non-use of condoms, increases women’s health risk and limits their employment opportunities. In an interview with Pro-Femme Twesehamwe, they recognised that unplanned pregnancy is the main reason for dropping out from high school for the majority of girls. Also, according to Pro-Femme Twesehamwe, most girls refuse to go back to school after giving birth due to social perceptions, and this limits their future access to the labour market.

In Rwanda, abortion is strictly prohibited and is classified as a crime. Even in the case of rape, a woman is not allowed to abort, except when it is proved that her physical health is in serious danger. The maximum penalty for a woman who aborts is up to 15 years in prison (Ministry of Justice 2001). The practice of self-induced abortion becomes the only remedy, with its consequences on the woman’s health or the risk of being in prison. Physical, mental and economic consequences caused by rape add a heavy burden to women.

To conclude, laws relating to marriages restrict women to make strategic decisions related to their lives and this contributes more to the traditional perception that women are inferior to men and, therefore, that parental authority has to be attributed to men as head of household. Financial ramifications on women who find themselves in illegal marriages become unbearable. Restrictions on the use of contraceptives and the strictest of laws against women who have abortions cause serious problems

in matters of sexual health of women. In addition, the unplanned births prevent girls from continuing their education, and their very limited resources put them in unstable financial situations. Furthermore, the social behaviour towards single women and/or those victims of rape exclude them from the community in such a way that it becomes difficult for them to find a husband or a job (Pro-Femme Twesehamwe).

A disproportionate application of the law gives the impression that women face discrimination in the law design. Indeed, it is more complicated for women when having an illegal abortion, even in the case of rape, being imposed a 15 years prison sentence, whereas a convicted rapist receives a punishment ranging between 5 and 10 years in prison (Rwandan Penal Code, 1977). Denying contraceptive use before the legal age and the fact that the laws in force in Rwanda ignore social pressures that young women face, unfortunately inhibit women's capacity to define their own economic choices and outcomes.

#### **5.1.1.2 Land Policy**

The equitable access to land remains problematic while land distribution remains dictated by traditional customs. For example, article 51 of the inheritance and marital property law states that the responsibility to distribute the family belongings between children belongs to the family council, which determines the part of the patrimony earmarked for the raising of minors (Pottier, 2006). This clause specifies that women are excluded from the process of land distribution because only a man must control the family, according to traditional custom.

The implementation of these land policy reforms present inequalities in the distribution of land to heads of households. Whilst 0.80 ha are allocated to male-headed households, only 0.66 ha are attributed to female-headed households and

furthermore this allowance is reduced to 0.60 ha when there is no male in the household headed by a woman (Daley *et al.*, 2008). Also , for multiple reasons linked to gender inequality such as lack of credit, lack of chemical fertilisers and many other agricultural inputs, only approximately three quarters of the arable land allocated to female heads of household is cultivated successfully (Daley *et al.*, 2010). In addition to this inequality in the acquisition of material and financial tools, the unequal distribution of unpaid work between men and women within households limits the time women have to cultivate crops compared to men. This will be examined further with evidence from interviews below.

The new government policy on productive exploitation contains in itself some ambiguities and imperfections that exclude women from rural areas from having equitable access to land and which allow local authorities to interpret it without any consideration for gender equality. The productive exploitation policy requires land holders to produce more crops; otherwise they run the risk of losing the land. However, as explained above, the fact of being in possession of a small parcel of land and not being able to have easy access to chemical fertilisers and other financial resources in order to maximise its fertility, results in women producing less than men and the risk of the land being confiscated is significant. What is more harmful is that the law on productive exploitation provides compensation in case land confiscation goes into force. However, land law specifies that the land has no value whatever its location and compensation is only calculated on the basis of property therein (Pottier, 2006). Thus, this means that many women in rural areas will certainly lose their lands and according to the compensation procedure, the reparation will be calculated according to the size and state of their dwellings - usually small and in a state of disrepair.

Contradictions and ambiguities between the law of inheritance and land law persist as presented above, which leads to significant ramifications for the equal division of land between the daughters and sons of families. Indeed, children born from legal marriages have the right to inherit under the law of succession. At the same time, the land law stipulates that land below 1ha cannot be divided; meaning that the equitable sharing of land among children is almost impossible because, according to tradition, the passing down of land is done according to patrilineal bases. Consequently, women suffer more from this traditional practice, since the continuity of the family line is provided only by the man. Land policy and succession rights undertaken by the Rwandan Government are thus limited by the persistence of patriarchal practices in rural areas (Isaksson, 2011; Cooper, 2010; Spencer, 2009).

In conclusion, for a woman to have capabilities to define her choices and strategies for her life, some barriers and social constraints, which she faces, have to be removed or at least alleviated. Despite various measures taken by the Rwandan Government, the various laws adopted in order to enhance their capacities do not protect many Rwandan women. Conversely, some laws, such as that of inheritance, land reforms and laws that guarantee women's representation at all levels of decision-making, contain discriminatory provisions and decrease women's abilities to define her choices. Indeed, for a woman to be able to invest her money, and in other activities other than agriculture, which is increasingly rare nowadays, she has to take advantage of her agricultural production. However, uncertain land rights do not allow women to have sufficient production to be used as a guarantee to access loans or other agricultural inputs. In addition, for a married woman and/or her children who are not legally registered there is a risk that she can be dispossessed of the land. In the same way, underutilised land becomes under threat of being confiscated by the

state. Thus, as the government has always maintained its intention to erase gender inequalities in all its forms, the reform of many laws such as those of land rights, inheritance and marriage must of necessity be purged of some discriminatory clauses. In addition, the implementation of these land, inheritance, and marriage laws is under the supervision of the administrative authorities at local level. The following section will focus on the decentralisation policy initiated by the government and analyse its inclusiveness concerning gender equality.

### **5.1.2 National Decentralisation Policy**

Since 2000, the Rwandan Government has continuously embraced a national approach of authoritative, political and fiscal decentralisation. The key point of this decentralisation arrangement has been to advertise participatory majority rule government by reinforcing the power and political proficiencies of local groups with the goal that they can be part of the programmes to decrease poverty and encourage national unity (see table 5.1). The sort of decentralisation chosen by Rwanda infers a power exchange to more levels of government, and the exchange of additional freedom as far as choice making and local fiscal administration (Ministry of Local Government and Social Affairs 2001).

Decentralisation and the expansion of some central government power to local entities is regularly observed by numerous professionals from the development field as a chance for the advancement of women's rights and women's expanded involvement in local administration. It is contended that the participation of women in local legislation allows them to have access to assets and, subsequently, control of them. However, for women and men to be part of the decentralisation arrangement, it is important to adjust the approach and procedures of its execution with the point of

gender equality. The thirty percent of women's representation in decision-making at all levels included in the 2003 constitution has not materialised because women's influence in the decision-making remains low, especially at local level.

Although the Rwandan Government had recognised the persistence of gender inequality in decision-making bodies in the decentralisation policy draft, such as the unequal participation of population in the decision making regarding issues that concern their livelihood (Ministry of Local Government and Social Affairs 2001), the policy draft does not include any principles in implementing this policy to alleviate these inequalities. For example, decentralisation was formulated and was to be implemented with a view to ensure: national unity and strengthening of local authority by providing financial, human and material resources (Ministry of Local Government and Social Affairs 2001).

Recognising the lack of authority of women in decision making bodies at the local level and the willingness to transfer some important powers such as land management, family conflict and resolution issues (see table 5.1), but not defining gender strategies within its implementation process, the decentralisation policy hides the grip of patriarchal practices, which limits the presence of women in these decision making bodies, especially for women from rural areas.

Furthermore, knowing the existence of patriarchal practices and the importance of local level decision making bodies in regarding resolution of lands in dispute and gender based violence issues, the decentralisation policy should ensure women's participation at these decision making levels by protecting them from male dominance at the local administrative bodies.

Many women interviewed (2 from women's associations, 6 skilled participants) recognised that women's absence at the decision making bodies at local level is due to the fact that men do not obey the women's authority at local level, which

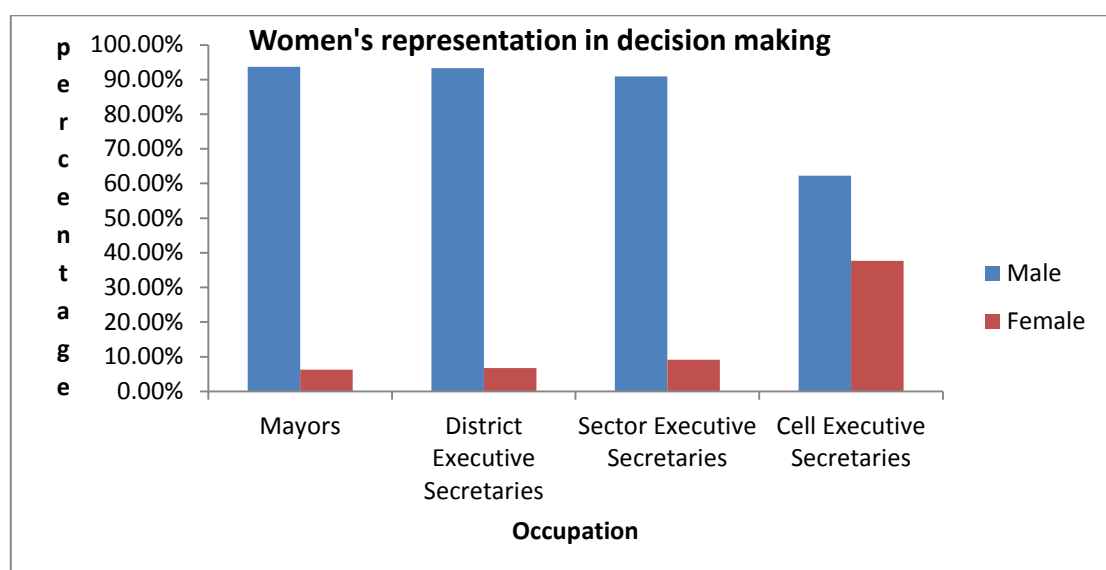


demotivates women from having the desire to apply for these jobs. Even once in these positions of power, many women prefer to resign following external pressures.

**Table 5.1 Rwanda Administrative Breakdown (Ministry of local Governance and Social Affairs, 2012)**

<b>Central Government Level</b>	
<b>Central Government</b>	Formulates policies and supports local government in terms of capacity reinforcement (monitoring and evaluation of programmes) and at the financial level.
<b>Province</b>	Their role is to align the planning of the development of districts with national policies and programmes, as well as to oversee the implementation of national policies within districts.
<b>Local Government Level: Decentralisation Bodies</b>	
<b>Districts</b>	Independent bodies at the administrative and financial level, these are the central platforms of the decentralisation policy. Districts are responsible, amongst others, for the implementation of policies adopted by the central government, for the design and operation of development programmes, as well as for the provision of services to the communities belonging to the decentralised bodies. They are also perceived as centres for socio-economic development and the promotion of participatory democracy.
<b>Sectors</b>	Responsible for the provision of various basic services to citizens and districts. The sectors analyse the needs of communities and define development plans in a participatory manner.
<b>Cells</b>	Mobilisation and development bodies, where basic services are provided. They are the coordination interface between sectors and villages.
<b>Villages</b>	Administrative level at which citizens participate directly in all issues related to their village and where they address interpersonal disputes. These are also units for the mobilisation of citizens.

**Chart 5.1: Women's representation in decision making bodies at local level**



**Source: ROR: National Gender statistics, 2013, graph created by Pascal Niyonkuru**

Beyond gender inequalities in the distribution of resources and assets, the contradiction between laws and patriarchal practices, and the under-representation of women in decision making bodies at the local level presents an additional burden to women. Although the 2003 Rwandan constitution had established a quota of 30 per cent of women in all decision making bodies, as an example, only 9 per cent of sector executive secretaries are women, 6 per cent are mayors of districts, while only 6.7 per cent of women are executive secretaries of districts and 37 per cent of cell executive secretaries (GOR 2013).

While the quota's policy introduced by the Rwandan Government allowed a strong female representation at the government and parliament levels, the decentralisation process at the local level begun in 2000 has not taken into account the principle of gender equality, which explains why decentralisation has not given sufficient space for women to succeed in influencing policies implemented at the local level. Furthermore, in addition to the under-representation of women in key positions related to the design and implementation of development programmes, lack of

technical and financial capacities of the decentralised entities do not favour the effective inclusion of gender equality in the decentralisation process (International Alert 2012). The primary objective of the establishment of public bodies at the local level was to enable people to participate in discussions related to the local development projects. However, women are still marginalised in these instances, while some important issues affecting them such as land issues, violence against women and family planning are increasingly frequent at local level (International Alert 2012).

In summary, these small representations at local level have a huge impact on women because, not only do they enhance the traditional customary practices, but also the non-representation in decision-making bodies, especially at local level, where all decisions on land rights and other reforms are made, makes women more vulnerable to gender inequalities. Although a fair representation at local level does not necessarily guarantee women's empowerment in all aspects, however, their limited involvement at grassroots level removes the sense of community ownership. In addition, as the next section will show, some normative constraints that limit women earning equal pay to that of the man must be taken into consideration if the government wants to transform successfully the country from a subsistence economy to a middle class society, as mentioned in Vision 2020.

### **5.1.3 Economic Development Strategies**

#### **5.1.3.1 EDPRS and Vision 2020**

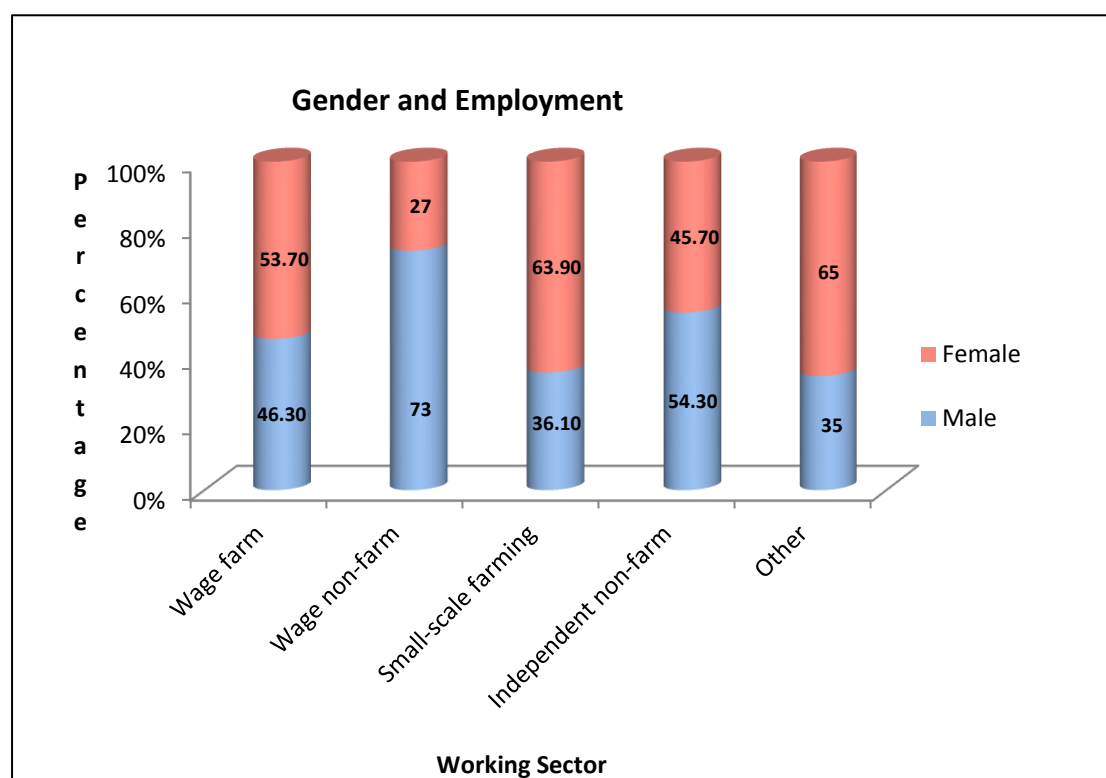
Within Rwandan mid and long term economic strategies as stipulated in the 2020 Vision and EDPRS, gender is treated as a crosscutting issue. However, as will be shown below, the inclusion of gender equality in these economic platforms remains problematic. Significant gaps are observed in the division of professional

employment, unequal wages between sexes and inequalities in the labour market, as well as the uneven number of men and women who are employed in the informal sector, which contributes to 75 per cent of GDP (ADBG, 2008).

To illustrate, the EDPRS has planned the creation of 1 million jobs within 5 years, of which half would be non-agricultural jobs (EDPRS 2008-2012). In addition, more than 75 per cent of paid non-farm jobs created between 2001 and 2006 were absorbed by men, 27.8 per cent compared to 11.6 per cent for women (Abbott, 2010). While more than 60 per cent of women are independent farmers, the number of men who leave the agricultural sector continues to rise (ADBG 2008).

The two economic development frameworks that the government has put in place, namely VISION 2020 and EDPRS, are the tools that should stimulate the country's economic growth. In addition, gender equality is recognised as a crucial element for the economic development of the country. However, instead of trying to remedy the existing inequalities in the workplace and in the labour market, in order to use the full economic potential of women who form more than 50 per cent of the economically active population (Abbott, 2010), EDPRS and Vision 2020 have identified high fertility rates and maternal mortality as being most women's economic empowerment constraints (Vision 2020)

**Chart 5.2: gender and employment (%)**

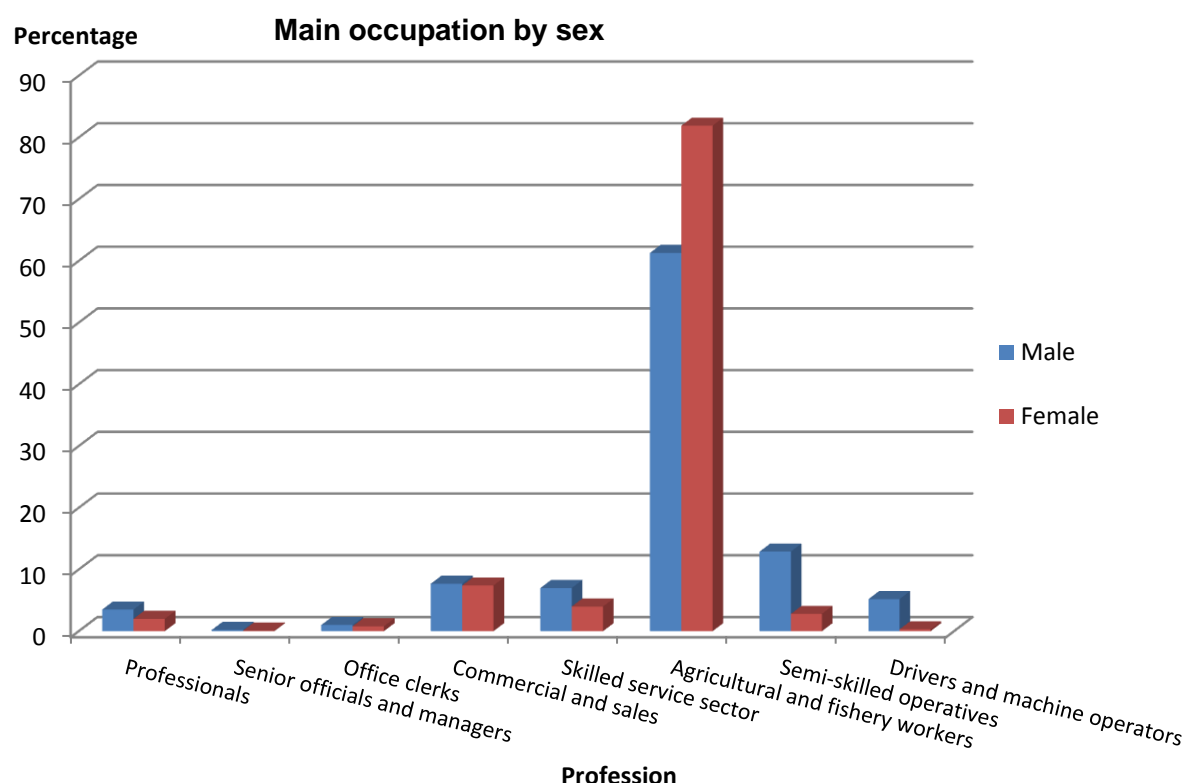


**Source: NISR, 2012: EICV3 (from economic activity thematic report), graph created by Pascal Niyonkuru**

The majority of women work in the informal sector, mainly in dependent non-farm activities such as petty trade, crafts or are trapped in an informal household work and as independent farmers.

Female household heads are concentrated in agricultural jobs as the main usual occupation. 76 per cent are independent farmers and a further 10 per cent are waged farm workers, meaning 86% of female household heads work in farming. This compares with 62 per cent of male heads.

**Chart 5.3: Occupation and gender (%)**



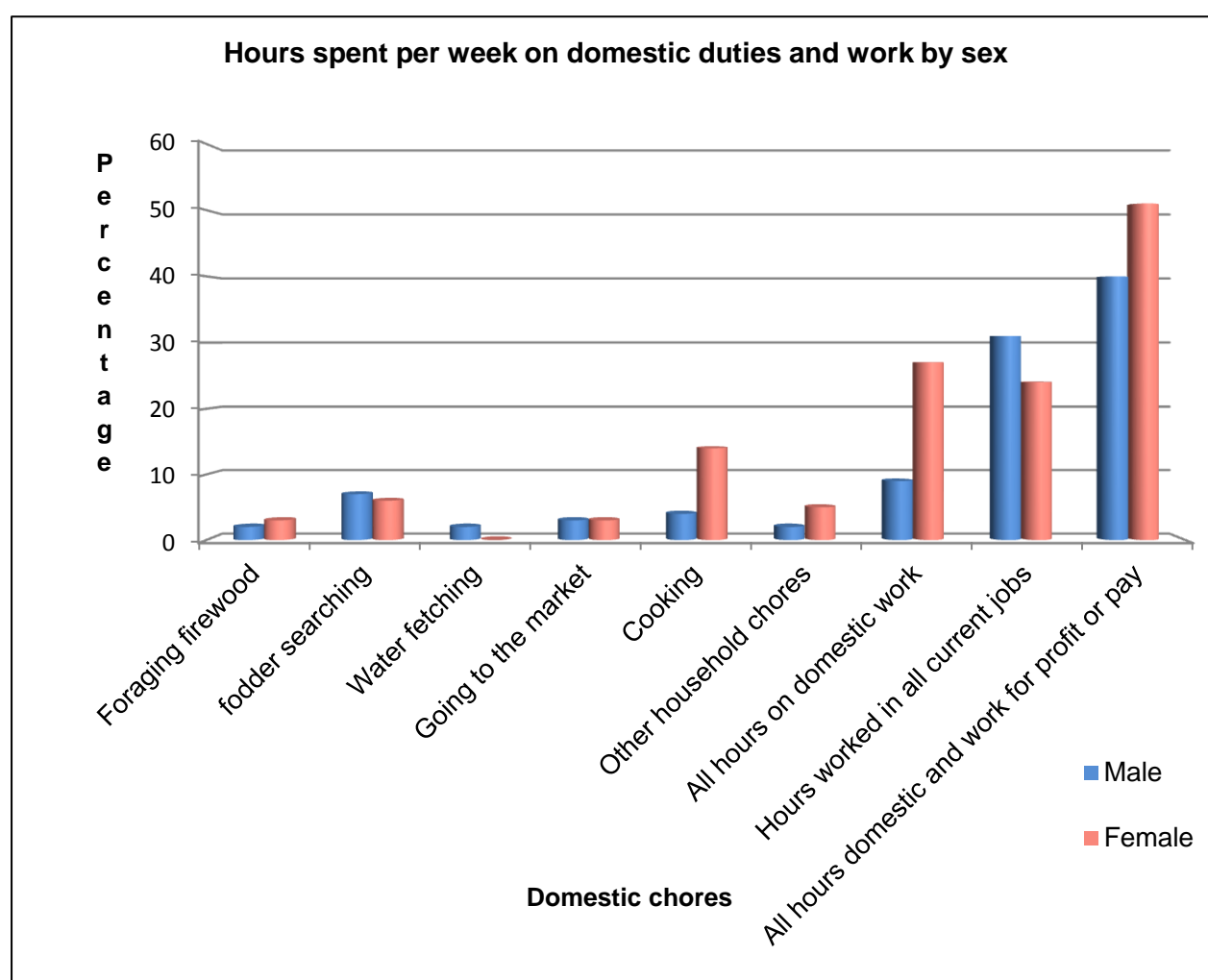
**Source: NISR, 2012: EICV3 (from economic activity thematic report), graph created by Pascal Niyonkuru**

Women are highly concentrated in the agricultural sector, with some 82 per cent of women working in agricultural occupations compared with 61 per cent of men. The occupations in which women find work outside agriculture are sales and commerce, where similar proportions of men and women work. Skilled service occupations employ some 4 per cent of women compared with 7 per cent of men. Men find work outside farming as drivers and machine operators, or in semi-skilled occupations. Women seem to have much less access to this kind of occupation. 2 per cent of women are in professional occupations compared with 3.5 per cent of men (GOR: NISR 2012).

Rwandan women's mobility is constrained by their commitment to family responsibilities. Consequently, as the above chart (5.2) shows, the informal labour

sector absorbs the majority of women, working as dependent or independent farmers or engaged in small businesses and crafts. To increase the productivity of women's work and especially integrate them into the formal sector jobs, more effort should be devoted to the elaboration of policies that mitigate the legal constraints which exclude many who remain in unpaid family activities. Many national economic development policies initiated currently are dedicated to the eradication of gender inequalities, but only at the income-generating activities level, thus forgetting the thousands of women who spend most of their time at the unpaid domestic works.

**Chart 5.4: Time spend on domestic activities per Sex**



Source: NISR, 2012: EICV3 (from economic activity thematic report), graph created by Pascal Niyonkuru.

Almost all women spend time on cooking and on domestic chores around the home. About half of them also carry out domestic work which is classified by the International Labour Organisation as an economic activity, for example foraging for firewood, searching for animal fodder and fetching water. Over half of all women do these tasks and the time spent on them averages 11 hours per week; overall women spend 20 hours a week on domestic tasks compared with men who spend just 9 hours. While men work an average of 31 hours a week in their paid or for profit jobs, women work just 24 hours; however, when time at work and time on domestic duties is added, women work 51 hours a week compared with men who do just 40 hours of all work (GOR: NISR 2012).

As discussed in the literature review, the scarcity of drinking water in the developing countries has left fewer choices to many people, especially in rural areas, using dirty water which is considered as the source of many diseases. In addition, the long distance to search for drinking water affects many women in terms of time, since they are responsible for such activity (Abbott, 2010). Furthermore, according to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), more than 95 per cent of the rural population in Rwanda use wood to cook their food. The high density of the population has caused deforestation leading to the degradation of the environment, and the scarcity of wood, once again forcing women to travel long distances in search of fuel for cooking (UNDP 2007) and restricting time devoted to agriculture and other income generating activities. As shown in chart 5.4, in addition to unpaid work, women spend their time in household activities.

The road infrastructures are more developed in urban areas or at the connection between large urban centres, while secondary roads commonly used by women in



rural areas in their daily activities of searching for wood, water, or for small trading activities are more challenging, especially in the rainy season, which again reduces their time for their daily activities. In addition, the woman is usually responsible for the family medical care. Thus, the lack of sufficient health centres added to the poor condition of the roads for accessing medical facilities reduces the time available for women in their income generating activities.

Another burden is the high number of HIV/AIDS patients among women. The literature review states that one of the grisly effects of violence against women is HIV/AIDS. “Many statistics have showed that the resultant effect of extreme poverty and gender inequality in post-conflict countries is women’s increased vulnerability to the epidemic HIV/AIDS” (UNDP 2002). Indeed, the genocide crisis has left a large number of people infected with the virus, mainly due to the large-scale campaign of rape (during the genocide).

Twenty years after, the scars of war remain and it is women who pay the price. The number of women with HIV/AIDS rises to 4 per cent among women aged between 15-49 compared to 2 per cent of men of the same age (RDHS 2012); women are more affected by the disease. The refusal by women to use contraceptives, and their inability to demand protected sex, mainly due to social constructs, is the possible source of disparity between the sexes suffering from the HIV/AIDS. According to the available statistics, and the observations made during field research, it seems that Rwandan cultural influences have much impact on the spread of HIV/AIDS and, therefore, the fact that women are responsible for family care, in addition to other domestic responsibilities, HIV/AIDS directly or indirectly affects women in their social-economic empowerment process.

The above quantitative data (see charts 5.3 and 5.4) is evidence that some government reforms and the persistence of patriarchal society make it difficult for Rwandan women's socio-economic development process, supporting the field findings. Indeed, many of the interviewed women (20:25) within the skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled categories agree that the socioeconomic status of women has been greatly improved when compared to the pre-genocide period. However, the same categories of respondents say that the domestic work, almost exclusively assigned to them, limits their time for maximum participation in income generating activities.

This research fieldwork supports quantitative evidence that women experience hardships as a result of pre-existing patriarchal structures and the government's progressive reforms. There were several commonalities between the skilled and semi-skilled participants. All participants interviewed believed that women perform the majority of domestic and childcare responsibilities. The majority of interviewees (24:29) felt that the government was doing a great job enhancing women's socioeconomic status in society because it was now culturally acceptable for women to work outside of the home.

Persistent inequalities in formal sector employment are observed, from high management positions to commercial activities. For example, men are twice as likely as their female counterparts to work in professional jobs (chart 5.3). In high management positions and the private sector, male dominance is obvious (EICV3 2012). Moreover, the Labour Code does not help women in their foray into the formal sector. Indeed, the Labour Code allows 12 weeks of maternity leave, six weeks of which are 100 per cent paid by the employer, and the other six are paid at 20 per cent (Hibal Goitom, 2009). Considering women can easily have four or five children, it is understandable at least on business grounds that employers would prefer to

employ men over women, since men are only allowed to take 4 days paternity leave. Skilled participants confirmed the existence of discrimination in hiring in the formal sector; 70 per cent reported that the persistence of patriarchal practices is among the sources of inequality, while 75 per cent consider the refusal of employers to pay maternity leave as being the main reason of the employers' reluctance to hire women.

Regarding sexual harassment in the workplace, 11 of 16 skilled and interviewed women responded positively to the existence of sexual harassment, especially in the private sector. It is quite difficult, even impossible, to measure in an explicit manner the extent of sexual harassment in the workplace, due to lack of sufficient and reliable data, which is caused by the reluctance of victims to report their harassment, either through fear of losing their jobs, or because the offence is considered as taboo in Rwandan custom. Although harassment has officially been considered a criminal offence for years, only a few cases of complaints of sexual harassment have been filed and prosecuted in the courts.

In short, the tools chosen by the Rwandan Government in the context of the implementation of the socio-economic development strategies of the country, namely the EDPRS and Vision 2020, have not been sufficiently developed in the way of resolving the real causes of inequality that affect the majority of women in Rwanda in the employment sector. The majority of women working in the informal and non-income generating activities are not protected by the labour legislation in force.

The mixture of patriarchal behaviour of Rwandan society, which is that the woman must carry alone the domestic activities and new tasks attributed to her, and obliging a woman to economically contribute to the household expenses put her in a strained situation, with negative consequences on her health as well as limitations on her time to acquire new knowledge to compete at the labour market.

Although the government has put in place strategies to enhance economic opportunities, women do not benefit from them at the same level as men, due to lack of time, poor infrastructure condition and high level of fertility, thus limiting women to participate in income-generating activities. Similarly, the lack of courage to report workplace sexual harassment cases increases the scourge and the risk for women to be sexually discriminated against is enormous. The inequality in the formal sector is mainly due to the reluctance of employers who refuse to employ women because they do not want to pay maternity leave. The introduction of cooperatives to increase women's economic opportunities produces unexpected outcomes. The next section will analyse some of the reasons for this under-performance.

#### **5.1.3.2 Cooperative Model**

In an effort to overcome the difficulties caused by the land consolidation plan and the attempt to improve certain sectors such as agriculture in order to raise household incomes, the Rwandan Government has put in place a cooperative scheme to help rural areas to exercise economies of scale, because access to the market remains one of the strongest challenges that small farmers face in Rwanda. Thus, a campaign to encourage the establishment of cooperatives which began in 2005 resulted in many legally registered cooperatives. A legal framework for cooperatives in Rwanda was adopted in 2006 and currently, according to recent estimates (non-official), in Rwanda, nearly 5,000 cooperatives mainly operating in agriculture and handicrafts sectors are legally registered, with about 2.5 million members (USAID, 2013). Although this study will be focusing on the gender inequalities in the agriculture and handicrafts sectors, other general income-generating activities will be also examined.

The aim of this section is to examine the role of cooperatives in the country's economic development. The cooperative model provides an inadequate contribution to women's economic improvement due to inequitable job distribution and disparities within the intra-household allocation, whilst at the same time women being required to contribute financially to the household. Such obstacles are not taken into account and this limits women's capabilities of controlling their incomes.

The post-genocide period has seen a great transformation in traditional gender relations. Long-time exempted from taking part in some activities, women have been constrained to take over some of the works traditionally reserved for men. After the crisis, some studies such as of *the International Fund for Agricultural Development* (IFAD), showed that in agriculture, although the responsibilities have changed (thanks to the government gender equality policies), gender inequalities persist in wages, control of income and especially the time that men and women spend in the fields (IFAD 2010). To illustrate, today women take part in clearing land, traditionally carried out by men. However, according to this IFAD study conducted in coffee cooperatives, inequality in this task can be found in the fact that women spend more time (about two times longer) than men in weeding, and at the same time with harvesting being predominantly if not exclusively reserved to women.

According to Rwandan Government research, "almost all women spend time on cooking and on domestic chores around the home. About half of them also carry out domestic work classified by the International Labour Organisation as an economic activity, including foraging firewood, searching for animal fodder and fetching water. Over half of all women do these tasks and the time spent on them averages 11 hours per week. Overall, women spend 20 hours a week on domestic tasks compared to men who spend just 9 hours. While men work an average of 31 hours a week in their

paid or for profit jobs, women work just 24 hours; however, when time at work and time on domestic duties are summed, then women work 51 hours a week compared with men who do just 40 hours of work per week” (GOR, EIVC Gender Thematic Report 2012).

In addition, according to IFAD, a woman’s daily schedule is too overloaded compared to that of men. Indeed, women wake up in the morning, go to work in the fields, then come home to take care of household chores and then return to the fields until late in the evening, whilst men use a half-day in the fields and spend the rest of the day in other income generating activities. In addition, men benefit more than women in terms of training and advice to increase their skills level. When it comes to marketing the products, this task belongs exclusively to men, although much of the work of coffee cultivation has been carried out by women (IFAD 2010).

Further evidence confirming the gender inequalities in income control is the comparison made by IFAD between married women and women heads of household. Indeed, according to the results of IFAD research, unmarried women enjoy their status of the head of households in managing their income and any decision-making on household expenses, which gives them a better position to their empowerment, whereas for a married woman, decision making and control of expenditure are usually reserved to men. IFAD's research has shown that women are often responsible for the transportation of coffee to washing stations, but are absent on payment day. Only men are in charge of collecting money which leaves women with little chance in the control of income from the coffee sales (IFAD 2010). However, although they enjoy the income control and decision-making advantages, unmarried women are at the same time disadvantaged because of the fact that there is a single income in the household and they are solely responsible for any domestic

activity, which limits their time for acquiring new skills or participation in other economic activities (IFAD 2010).

IFAD's research results mentioned above are similar to those collected in 2013 for this fieldwork. The lack of sufficient productive land due to the high density of population led to non-governmental organisations investing in many handicrafts projects in collaboration with the Rwandan Government. Men and women have been encouraged to come together in cooperatives in order to receive efficient coaching and acquire both resources and skills training.

The goal of this economic strategy was to reduce the continuing dependence on the traditional agricultural activities, and to create jobs for the growing number of unemployed women and men whose everyday lives rely on street trading, while street sales are banned in Rwanda.

There is a common trend between the literature review and this research's qualitative results that, the double burdens of managing an income generating activity along with domestic duties constitute the major barrier for a woman to be engaged into any financial empowerment project such as a cooperative (see chap 2.5). Similarly, focus group discussions, conducted with 3 cooperatives of which one was formed of mixed married and widowed women, one composed exclusively of widows, and another consisting of married women working in cooperatives are facing several challenges such as the fact that they spent most of their time working in their cooperatives in addition to performing all domestic and care giving tasks. Also the lack of qualified personnel, resources, the confidence to find markets for their products are hindrances that do not promote the proper functioning of their cooperatives. In addition, female members of these cooperatives are often affected by societal norms that limit their capabilities to be economically empowered.

Cultural barriers continue to affect many women as even in the group discussions no woman was willing to answer my questions, not because they were refusing to give their opinions, but because according to Rwandan custom it is considered rude for a woman to make eye contact with someone, especially if she considers him/her as superior. It was after the head of the cooperative encouraged them to talk to me, that they felt comfortable. The weaknesses of these handicrafts cooperatives seem more abundant. For example, the three chair persons of the cooperatives, despite saying that their cooperatives were not performing to the level they wanted, were not able to respond accurately as to whether their cooperatives were profitable or not because none of them was trained in bookkeeping.

Two aspects should be highlighted as the sources of these cooperatives' low profitability. First, the poor quality of their products does not meet national standards, not to mention international requirements. Indeed, almost all these handicraft cooperatives sell the same products that are either traditional clothes, or art objects with sub-standard quality, and the lack of diverse products on the market make the already small market saturated. Secondly, the lack of trained staff means the cooperatives are unable to undertake innovative strategies. The consequent low profits are significant. For example, according to one of the officials of a federation of several cooperatives, some women prefer to leave these cooperatives to return to their former jobs that they deem as more profitable.

In short, the government's strategy to encourage women in cooperatives may worsen their economic situation if these cooperatives continue to operate as they are now. Indeed, if women continue to spend all their time in cooperatives that are not profitable, they waste their time which could be spent in other sectors where they



can earn more income. Wasting time in cooperatives that are not profitable puts women in untenable economic situations.

When asked about the possible contribution of men in domestic responsibilities, women responded that housework absorbs most of the time that women should devote to earn income. However, a surprising but interesting conclusion from the widows interviewed was that they felt more independent than married women.

This view was not shared by either the various official reports from government or non-governmental organisations, or by all men interviewed. All agreed that widows were the most vulnerable category of people in society. The argument made by the semi-skilled and unskilled participants was that widows enjoyed more government support than other women. Other women felt that widows were empowered because of the fact that they were free to make decisions about their families.

Thus, it seems that married women are much more likely to have access to resources than women heading households. However, the fact that they have the power to control household income and their ability to make decisions makes female household heads feel more independent. Furthermore, female heads of households are much less exposed to gender based violence due to the absence of male authority within the household, as RWAMREC posits that women victims of violence are most of the time married women (RWAMREC 2013). The next section will be devoted to the economic consequences of gender-based violence.

#### **5.1.4 Gender-based violence**

According to several studies on gender-based violence, not only does it cause adverse effects on women's physical, sexual and mental health, but also the victim, along with their families suffer socially, economically and emotionally (WHO 2002;

Kumar, 2001). In 2005, the Rwandan Government found that the husband is often a source of violence perpetrated in a family. In 47% of cases, 31 per cent of women from the age of 15 had experienced physical violence at least once (UNIFEM 2008). In addition, further detailed studies from UNIFEM revealed that from a sample of 1056 women, 10 per cent of them had been victims of at least one sexual touching, and among 108 women victims of violence interviewed, 48 per cent had been forced to have sex. Also, according to this survey, married women were identified as being more vulnerable to sexual abuse than unmarried women and the spouses were often deemed as responsible. The same survey revealed the reasons why women victims of sexual abuse refrained from reporting domestic violence; ignorance of their rights, economic constraints preventing them from paying justice fees, social constraints forcing them to hide their sexual abuse and a lack of will on behalf of the justice and health services and the local authority to ensure an enabling environment for women to report violence perpetrated within households (UNIFEM 2008).

As discussed in the literature review, post-conflict individuals can develop behaviour of violence due to the traumatic incidents experienced during the conflict (Ward, 2002). In addition, for men to adhere to newly post-conflict reshaped gender norms may become challenging and they may feel distanced post-conflict (see chap 2.6). Similarly, in Rwanda, the persistent effects of the genocide and the high rate of poverty, aggravated by the gender constructs within the Rwandan population are the root causes that continue to increase gender based violence in Rwanda (RWAMREC 2010). According to this research's interviews with two women traders and a Pro-femme Twesehamwe association member, the men's monopoly of control of household income is common in Rwanda, and is classified as "economic" violence because men use it to keep the woman under their economic dependence in order to

maintain their masculine power. In addition, according to more than 45 per cent of skilled respondents, women's economic development is inhibited by violence against women. In interviews made with Pro-femme Twesehamwe, and Duterimbere members, they claim that the traditional beliefs that violence within the household being a private family matter persists and women opt for not reporting domestic abuse for fear that their spouses will not contribute any more income if the abuse is reported.

Another issue discussed during this research data collection was the role and consequences of the inkwano (dowry). Except for Pro-femme Twesehamwe and RWAMREC, all other respondents consider the dowry as a means to give the woman and her family value. However, Pro-femme Twesehamwe and RWAMREC see the dowry as a means for men to consider women as their private property, which gives men an absolute right to control them. In addition, in a country where over 63.2 per cent of the population lives below the international poverty line (World Bank 2011), \$500 for the dowry in a rural area and more or less \$800 in Kigali, as estimated by RWAMREC, is a huge amount to reach. Even those who manage to pay it are forced to ask for a loan from banks, which creates additional economic pressure on the young families, and this can lead to violence against the women after marriage.

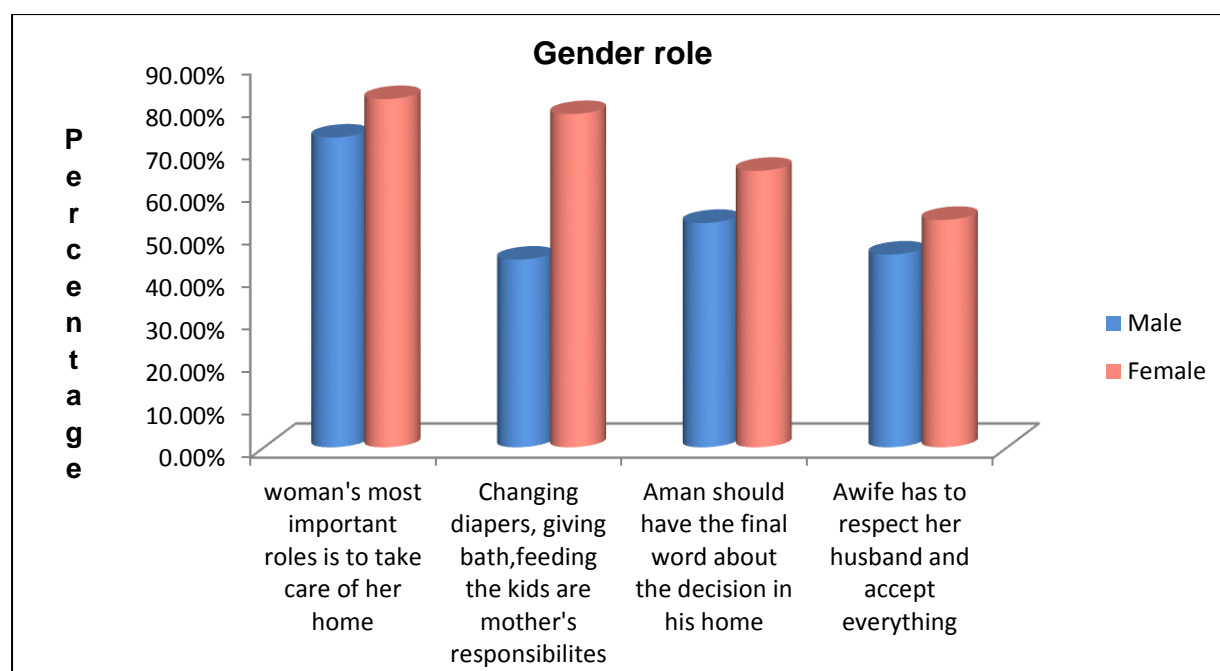
Although good government intentions to significantly reduce gender-based violence exist, women's economic dependence on their husbands and the social perceptions vis-à-vis sexually abused women force them not to report domestic violence, which accentuates the violence and inhibits the government's efforts to track down the perpetrators. In addition, the ongoing violence may undoubtedly hinder the effectiveness of any strategy related to the country's economic development.

Accepting as the victim of sexual violence is the first step in the fight against domestic disputes. Yet convincing a woman to accept being seen as a sexual victim is very difficult. Although it is agreed that both sexes can suffer gender-based violence, this section will focus on violence against women to see how the GBV can affect women in their economic improvement process.

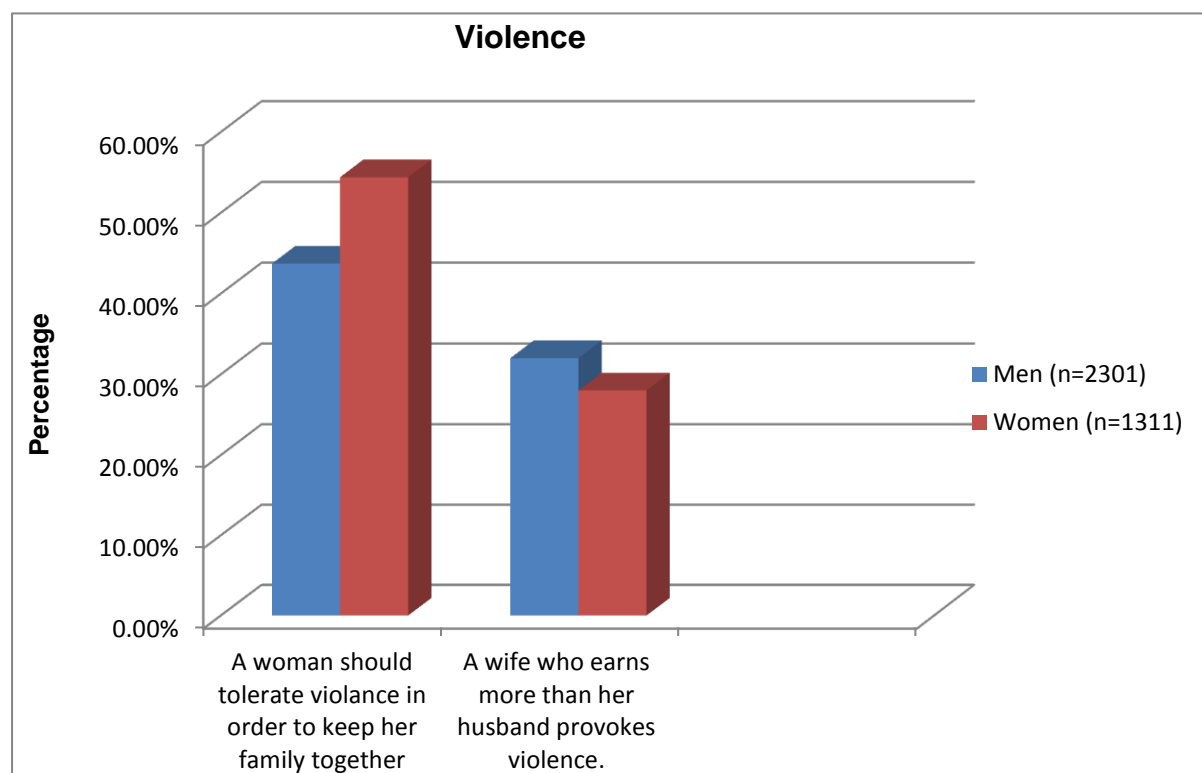
The main factors that contribute to gender-based violence as identified by the Gender Monitoring Office (GMO) and Rwanda Men's Resources Centre (RWAMREC) are: an ignorance on existing laws preventing and responding to GBV issues, alcohol and drug abuse, poverty, revenge, illegal unions among couples which leads to a lack of respect between them thus leading to violence, and cultural and traditional beliefs linked to gender roles and patriarchal stereotypes (RWAMREC 2010; GMO 2013). Four types of gender-based violence have been identified by the Rwandan Government, namely physical, psychological, sexual and economic violence (MGFP 2010).

A local NGO (RWAMREC) carried out a survey covering the whole national territory on the perception of masculinity and the problem of gender-based violence committed by men against women. The results from this survey indicate that 57.2 per cent of 1311 women who responded to the survey admitted to having experienced gender-based violence from their husbands, while men who have undergone gender-based violence from their partners were only 38 per cent among 2301 responses.

**Chart 5.5: RWAMREC questionnaire results on Gender role (Men and women totally agree)**



**Chart 5.6: RWAMREC questionnaire results on Violence (Men and women totally agree)**

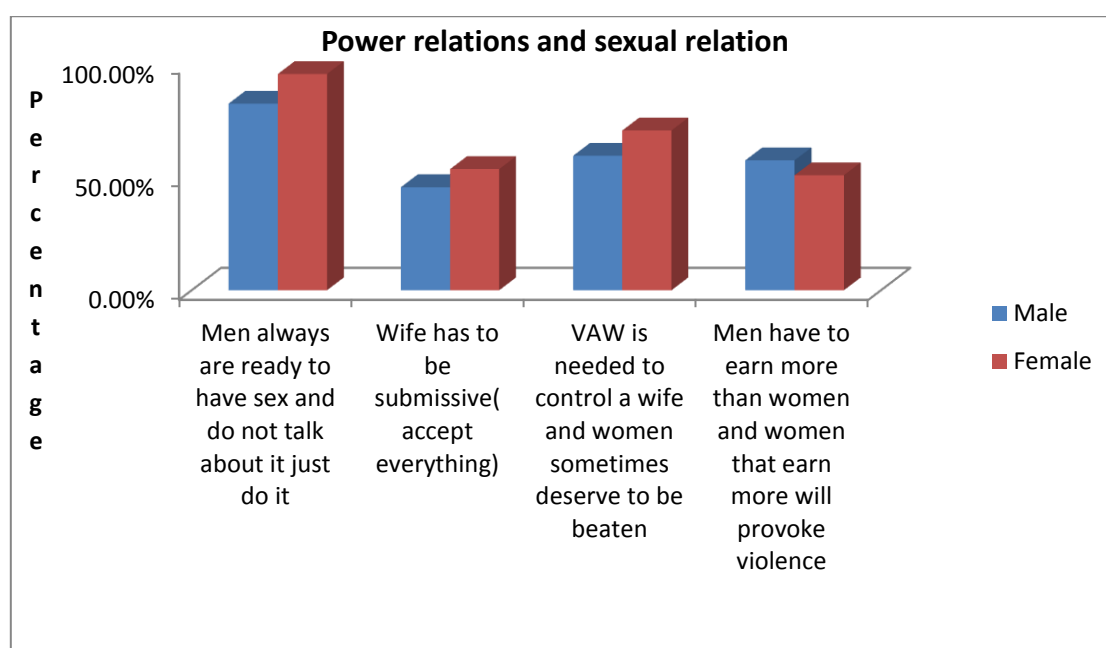


According to the RWAMREC research, forced sexual intercourse (32.4 per cent) and slapping (30.3 per cent) are the main types of violence experienced (RWAMREC

2010). Furthermore, according to the survey data, within a household the more a woman earns compared to her spouse, the more she is exposed to violence (see chart 5.6). According to RWAMREC, this attitude is attributed to the changing gender roles after the war when society, and in particular men, still resist this change in the balance of power within the household.

Given the results of this survey, there is a clash of two conflicting responsibilities resulting in a possible rise in gender-based violence within households. Indeed, on the one hand there is the post-genocide social transformation encouraging women to earn income, and on the other hand the traditional social beliefs that a woman is only intended to do domestic and care giving works and a man is deemed to be provider and head of household. Then, once the woman earns more than her husband, it implies she is neglecting her family obligations and the masculine identity of the man is in danger, which causes violence against women (RWAMREC 2010). Below, the results of this survey effectively show how power relationships and expectations between a man and a woman in the household are unequal.

**Chart 5.7: RWAMREC questionnaire results on power relations and sexual relations (Men and women partially or fully agree)**



According to these results, major household decisions are a man's responsibility, while the woman is in charge of housework and care giving activities, which means that power relations are still defined by traditional roles in Rwanda. The fact that the majority of women and men say that in order to have total control of a woman, violence against women is the only adequate means and that beating a woman may be deemed to be a necessary act, constitutes a shocking and humiliating statement for women (see chart 5.7). In addition, the assertion by more than half of the participants that the more a woman earns compared to her husband, the more there is a risk of gender-based violence (see chart 5.7), is a clear sign that men dominate the structure of household income, which is contrary to the Rwandan Constitution's recommendations and the Rwandan Government's objectives in regarding gender equality and the rising of women's economic status. In its conclusions, the study revealed that the distribution of gender roles in Rwanda continue to be dominated by patriarchal norms.

Among other questions that participants were asked in this survey was one relating to how people perceive the 2008 law on gender-based violence. Although the majority of respondents (85 per cent) were aware of this law very few of them, 5.1 per cent of women and 3.6% of men, considered that it could help women. Curiously, almost all women and all men who responded (95 percent) consider this law as unfair for men (RWAMREC 2010). This suggests that there is a clash between government progressive reforms designed to strengthen the gender policy and traditional social perceptions of gender. As result, laws and policies intended to empower women may increase conflicts within households because Rwandan society remains unable to culturally adapt to these reforms.

In summary, this section aimed to prove that because gender roles continue to be defined by patriarchal power, government reforms undertaken in order to improve women's economic status are exposing women to violence because these reforms are in conflict with existing patriarchal structures. The following section will examine how people perceive post-conflict gender reforms as well as the gender equality within the government political agenda.

## **5.2 Awareness and Perception of Post-Conflict Gender Reforms and Government's Political Agenda on Gender Equality**

### **5.2.0 Introduction**

Transforming persistent social perceptions is an essential step to achieve the economic and social betterment of women. To accomplish successfully this task, the society needs a clear awareness of the meaning and importance of gender equality and the advantages of an economically stable woman. However, as findings from survey and other qualitative data obtained during the researcher's fieldwork indicate the population is not yet able to interpret the government's reforms introduced in the context of improving the economic status of the Rwandan woman.

This section presents the research findings based on the survey data analysis as well as other qualitative data obtained through different interviews, focus group discussions, and observations. A closed-ended and Likert scale questionnaire style was designed according to the review of the current literature, to assist in capturing participants' awareness and understanding of the government's post-conflict gender



reforms and the degree of the country's gender equality from people from different socio-economic and education backgrounds.

### 5.2.1 Awareness of Post-conflict Laws and Policies

The extent to which the participants are aware and understand the government post-conflict reforms was asked. The second section of the questionnaire was designed to capture the knowledge of the participants of the post-conflict government gender reforms. Respondents were asked to indicate how they knew about the reforms. The first question of this category was to assess the respondents' knowledge of some of the post-conflict laws and policies. Tables below provide a summary as well as details of the respondent's awareness of the government post-conflict laws and policies.

**Table 5.2: Summary of the respondents' awareness of laws and policy**

Law and policy	Low (1 point)		Intermediate (2 points)		High (3points)		Very high (4points)	
	Frequency	score	Frequency	score	Frequency	score	Frequency	score
Land policy	30	30	27	54	14	42	5	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>Number of respondent:76, scores 146, percentage: 16%</b>							

**Table 5.3: Detail of the respondents' awareness of Land policy**

Law and Policy	Score ( out of 304)	Percentage
Land policy	146	16
Inheritance Law	242	27
Gender-based violence law	156	18
Decentralisation policy	98	11
Vision 2020	129	15
Other	119	13
Total	890	100

The participants were asked to rate their knowledge and understanding of the current land policy (see table 5.3), by indicating if their awareness and understanding was high, very high, intermediate or low. Of 76 questionnaires fully completed, land policy scored 146 out of 304, or 16 per cent of the proposed laws and policies in the questionnaires.

The results show that the majority of the respondents who completed the questionnaire were not aware of the land policy, although only 7 per cent of them are fully aware of the policy.

**Table 5.4: Awareness of Inheritance law**

Law and policy	Low (1 Point)		Intermediate (2 points)		High (3points)		Very high (4points)	
Inheritance Law	Frequency	score	Frequency	score	Frequency	score	Frequency	score
	9	9	10	20	15	45	42	168
Total	Number of respondents: 76; Scores: 242; Percentage: 27 Percent.							

The inheritance law obtained the highest score, with 242 points out of 304 available. However, despite being best known amongst other laws and policies, a greater number of people are still not aware of this significant and pertinent law.

**Table 5.5: Awareness of Gender-based violence law**

Law and policy	Low (1 Point)		Intermediate (2 points)		High (3points)		Very high (4points)	
	Frequency	Score	Frequency	Score	Frequency	Score	Frequency	Score
Gender-based Violence	30	30	22	44	14	42	10	40
Total	Number of Respondents:76; Score: 156; Percentage: 18percents							

The results indicate that although 14 and 10 of the respondents respectively know well and very well the law regarding gender-based violence, the majority of the respondents know little or are unaware of this important law.

**Table 5.6: Awareness of Decentralisation policy**

Law and policy	Low (1 Point)		Intermediate (2 points)		High (3points)		Very high (4points)	
	Frequency	Score	Frequency	Score	Frequency	Score	Frequency	Score
Decentralisation Policy	62	62	8	16	4	12	2	8
Total	Number of Respondents:76; Score: 98; Percentage: 11percents							

The decentralisation policy is not really known by the respondents, at least according to the above results. 62 of the respondents indicated that they do know the existence of this policy at a low level, while 8 said that their awareness is “intermediate” and 12 of them stated “high” as their awareness level of the decentralisation policy. Only 2

of the respondents recognised their awareness of this policy at “very high” level which makes it the lowest score at 98 points.

**Table 5.7: Awareness of Vision 2020**

Law and policy	Low (1 Point)		Intermediate (2 points)		High (3points)		Very high (4points)	
	Frequency	score	Frequency	score	Frequency	score	Frequency	score
Vision 2020	48	48	13	26	5	15	10	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>Number of Renspodent:76; Score: 129; Percentage:15 Percent</b>							

Knowledge of the country’s economic strategy “Vision 2020” scored 129 points, which put it at the second place of the lowest scores behind decentralisation policy.

**Table 5.8: Awareness of other Laws and Policies**

Law and policy	Low (1 Point)		Intermediate (2 points)		High (3points)		Very high (4points)	
	Frequency	score	Frequency	score	Frequency	score	Frequency	score
Other	55	55	6	12	8	24	7	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>Number of respondent:76; Score:119; Percentage:13 Percent</b>							

Some among the respondents, however, are aware of other laws and policies not mentioned in the questionnaire.

Similarly, the same question of the awareness of the laws and policies implemented to protect women’s rights and enhance their economic status was asked to skilled and semi-skilled participants. Most skilled participants were aware of the Gender-based Violence bill, Inheritance rights bill, Vision 2020 and the land laws, whilst semi-skilled participants seem to be confused regarding government programmes

that intend to support women. For example, their awareness of the government's gender laws and policies is solely based on their recognition of the improvement of women's rights. According to them, the government's policies promote gender equality without mentioning any specific law or policy implemented to enhance their economic status or to protect their rights.

The institutional framework of Rwanda has been transformed in order to adapt the country's new gender inclusive agenda as discussed in the literature review chapters. Many reforms intending to enhance social-economic status have been implemented. However, as the results show, there is a great part of the population who are not aware of these gender reforms, and/or do not understand the support provided by the government, and this may be the starting point of the failure of such reforms. Mosedale (2005) suggests that the lack of the participatory approach in facilitating empowerment and measuring the impact of reforms formulated for gender equality purposes, results in creating difficulties for agencies to adequately implement such reforms. For example, the participants were requested to indicate their awareness level of the gender-based violence law, and the majority of the respondents stated that they know of it but at a low level (39 per cent) or intermediate level (29 per cent). According to the Rwandan Government, there are four types of gender-based violence, namely physical, economical, sexual and psychological violence (MGFP 2010). Furthermore, many empirical research studies have identified that beside the physical and sexual health consequences caused by gender-based violence, there are also serious social-economic impacts for the whole family (WHO 2002; Kumar, 2001). The lack of understanding by many women of this law designed to address the high rate of gender-based violence, allows the violence to continue to spread and this constitutes a hindrance to the effectiveness of any economic development project. In addition, the decentralisation policy scores only

12 points and 8 points respectively of the 76 respondents who stated that they are fully aware of the policy, whilst 70 out of 76 respondents stated that either they do not know about the policy or they are aware of it but only at an intermediate level.

Nonetheless, decentralisation was designed to alleviate the continuing gender gap in decision-making participation, especially at local level. Thus, as illustrated in the first section of this chapter, the continuing gender imbalance in this sector more than ten years after the implementation of decentralisation policy can be justified by women's ignorance of this policy. Besides, this ignorance may additionally be caused by the continuing cultural and traditional influences in defining gender roles and the men's resistance to change their attitudes, as shown by the survey results (see table 5.9).

The non-recognition of the government's support is another strong signal that women feel that they are not benefiting from these progressive reforms because they do not themselves determine what they want to change regarding their socio-economic situation and how they intend to achieve it.

The fact that many women do not know laws and policy reforms seems to indicate that these have been designed without women's participation to meet practical gender needs (PGNs). According to Moser (1989), the practical gender needs are the immediate needs identified by women to assist their survival in their socially accepted roles within existing power structures. Adequate living conditions such as food provision, health care, access to safe water and sanitation are vital for families and this is what policies to meet PGNs focus on. Access to income-earning opportunities must also be overcome. Even though challenging gender inequality needs may be a direct result of women's subordinate positions in society, PGNs focus on strategic gender needs (SGNs).

SGNs are identified by women who require strategies for challenging male privilege and dominance. These needs may relate to: experiences of domestic and other

sexual violence, ownership and control of resources, inequalities in the gender division of labour and of the participation in decision-making. These needs seek to change women's position in society and status in relation to men and are often seen as feminist in nature, as they are more likely than PGNs to be resisted (Moser, 1989).

### 5.2.2 Constraints to Gender Equality and Women's Economic Empowerment

The third question was to indicate which factor may be a constraint to the government's gender equality and women's empowerment programmes.

**Table 5.9 Constraints to government's gender equality and women's empowerment programmes**

CONSTRAINTS	POINTS ACCORDED (OUT OF 304)	PERCENTAGE (%)
Culture and Traditions	210	17
Lack of women's interest	110	9
Lack of women's skills	201	17
Violence against women	194	16
Resistance of men	219	18
Lack of political will	165	14
Other	109	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>1208</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>N:76</b>		

According to the responses (see table 5.9) culture, traditions and men's resistance to attitude change are the main obstacles to the government's gender reforms implemented to enhance gender equality and women's empowerment. Other constraints are the lack of women's skills (17 per cent) and the continuing gender

based violence, along with the lack of political will to push these reforms to succeed, as well as a lack of interest on the part of women themselves.

In addition, when asked about the challenges facing women in their economic empowerment process, the majority of skilled participants stated that patriarchal attitudes are the main barrier to gender equality and a hindrance to women's economic development in Rwanda.

Among the specific patriarchal inequalities cited by the skilled participants were: the need for permission from husbands to take part in income generating works, women's exclusion from the control of income and resources, gender roles in the household, poor female representation in decision-making bodies at local levels and the burden caused by high fertility rates. Semi-skilled participants view the lack of women's capacity, particularly due to a lack of resources, inadequate skills and limited markets for their products as the foremost challenges to their economic empowerment. However, both skilled and semi-skilled participants commonly agreed that women are not economically empowered due to their lack of confidence, and this is attributed to historic cultural and traditional inequalities, according to the skilled participants.

A common trend seen within both literature review and the primary data is that the women's ability to fully participate in the economy is often influenced by social and political factors. In many countries, behaviours and what is attributed to women and men are always expected to be shaped by culture, history and tradition. In general, women lack full autonomy, have limited resources at their disposal and are not fully integrated in the decision-making process that can transform their societies as well as their own lives (OECD 2011).

As discussed in the literature review, women's economic empowerment as defined by UNIFEM is the "women's ability to get access to resources and control over



income so she can make a sustainable living standard on a long term basis” (UNIFEM in Carr, 2000: 2). According to UNIFEM, women need long-term profits in terms of reforming laws and policies that prevent them from benefiting from the development process (UNIFEM in Carr, 2000). Additionally, the World Bank has acknowledged the existence of strong social norms which dictate women’s social and economic opportunities despite the fact that there are legal instruments set up to promote and ensure women’s rights (World Bank 2011). As shown in the post-conflict gender reforms analysis section, diverse laws and policies have been implemented to enhance women’s social economic status in Rwanda. However, these gender reforms did not take into account the historical patriarchal inequalities which limit them from access and control over income and resources, and this is what the majority of the respondents expressed as the leading barrier to gender equality and women’s economic empowerment in Rwanda.

### 5.2.3 Understanding of Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment

The third category of the questions was oriented to capture the respondents’ views on the country’s gender equality and women’s empowerment programmes. Firstly, the respondents were asked to give their views on the government’s support to women. Table 5.14 below shows the results.

**Table 5.10: Government’s support to women**

LEVEL OF PERCEPTION	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE (%)
Low	10	13
Intermediate	16	21
High	30	40
Very high	20	26
<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>100</b>

The majority of respondents believe that the government support women sufficiently, while 21 per cent of them consider the government's support to women as intermediate. However, 13 per cent of the respondents consider the government support as insufficient. The second question was to capture the respondents' perception on the discrimination against women in formal employment.

**Table 5.11: Discrimination against women in formal employment**

LEVEL OF PERCEPTION	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE (%)
Low	37	49
Intermediate	18	24
High	14	18
Very high	7	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>100</b>

The majority of respondents consider discrimination against women in formal jobs as minimal. However, 27 per cent of the 76 participants still perceive this gender inequality in the labour market as one the factors which harm Rwandan women in their economic empowerment process. The third question was about their perception on gender equality and women's empowerment within the government's political agenda. As shown below, the respondents consider that the government is doing well and very well (42 per cent) and (50 percent) respectively, in dealing with the gender equality and women's empowerment issues, although 8 per cent of them believe that those issues are not taken seriously by the government (Table 5.12).

**Table5.12: Gender equality and women’s empowerment in the government’s political agenda**

Level of perception	Number of respondents	Percentage(%)
Low	5	7
Intermediate	1	1
High	32	42
Very high	38	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>100</b>

Respondents were also requested to give their views on the importance of the men’s involvement in gender equality and women’s empowerment programmes. It was observed that for the 76 questionnaires fully completed almost all respondents agreed that men should be sensitised in women’s empowerment.

**Table 5.13: Men should be sensitised in women’s empowerment**

Level of perception	Number on respondents	Percentage (%)
Strongly disagree	1	1
Disagree	8	11
Agree	39	51
Strongly agree	28	37
<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>100</b>

Lastly, the questionnaire also sought to capture the level of knowledge of the meaning of “empowerment” from participants, i.e. how much they feel empowered. As shown in the table a mixture of responses was given. Some 11 (15 per cent) do not know if they are empowered, while 23 (30 per cent) felt highly empowered, and 13 (17 per cent) very highly empowered. However, others felt that their empowerment is at low and intermediate levels respectively.

**Table 5.14: Knowledge of the meaning of “empowerment”**

LEVEL OF PERCEPTION	NUMBER RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE (%)
Low	9	12
Intermediate	20	26
High	23	30
Very high	13	17
Don't know	11	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>100</b>

In addition, perceptions towards gender equality were sought during the interviews and focus group discussions, to examine and assess the attitudes towards government support, gender equality and women’s empowerment. Based on the interview results, it seems that people are considerably confused about the meaning of “gender equality” and the government programmes that intend to support women. Apart from the parliamentarians and other decision-makers interviewed, who recognised the government support to women (from taking into account gender issues within government’s economic strategies such as Vision 2020, to the implementation of gender laws and policies), other skilled and semi-skilled participants said that the government has improved women’s status compared to that of the pre-genocide era. However, they believe that women still need the government support to reduce the continuing gender inequalities within Rwandan society. On the other hand there is a confusion regarding “gender equality” and women’s empowerment. In fact, according to some respondents they felt that they were empowered because they have taken over men’s traditional responsibilities within the household. This is in contradiction to the literature review. In fact, the feminist perspective considers empowerment as an approach aimed to enable men

and women to realise their fullest potential whilst not taking power away from men (Reevers et al., 2000; Kabeer, 2001).

Misunderstanding the meaning of “gender equality” and “empowerment” may have contributed to the failure of the government’s projects and programmes implemented for gender equality promotion. In fact, as mentioned in the literature review, Kabeer views empowerment as a way to develop enough capabilities for people who have been denied the ability to make strategic choices for their lives (Kabeer, 2001). Women who believe that their empowerment is based solely on taking away men’s power may lose the ability to make independent life choices and omit to take part in the activities which intend to change existing gender inequalities because, in addition, women need to be self-confident to believe that it is their right to make such life choices (Kabeer, 2001).

Furthermore, all participants interviewed stated that women are responsible for the childcare and other domestic activities. However, they enthusiastically believe that the government has achieved much in allowing women to take part in income generating activities outside their homes, despite recognising that they have little influence in household decisions or income control. This is against Golla *et al.*’s suggestions in regarding women’s economic empowerment. According to them, a woman can be considered empowered not only by the fact she obtains resources and other assets to exploit her opportunities but also, and more importantly, if she can manage to choose and control her resources and income that can shape her life (Golla *et al.*, 2011). In addition, the Cameroon case study illustrated in the literature review (see Chapter 2.5), may explain the additional double burden to women earning income in a patriarchal society like Rwanda. According to the study, when a woman earns an income, a man feels that the woman’s extra income is to reduce his

household financial contribution, which allows him to spend his now disposable cash outside the household. The study stated that the woman's participation in income generating activities combined with her domestic responsibilities and the poor sanitation facilities, regularly lead women to being exposed to illness and health deterioration (Mayoux, 2001).

In Rwanda, more than 30 per cent of households are headed by women (Republic of Rwanda: EICV3) due to the 1994 genocide. Many empirical studies have indicated that female household heads are among the poorest and disadvantaged persons in society (UNDP 2007). It is against this background that unmarried women have been perceived as the most empowered women in Rwanda.

Unmarried business women and semi-skilled widow participants interviewed felt more empowered because they were able to control their income without men's interference, and felt that they were economically comfortable despite earning a single income within the household. This demonstrates, as the literature review suggests, that for a woman to be economically empowered, not only does she need resources at her disposal on which she can draw to succeed economically, but also she needs norms and institutions which can strengthen her ability to control her resources and income, as well as making her own life choices in order to increase her economic opportunities: this is consistent with the definition of women's economic empowerment employed in this research.

When asked if men should be involved in promoting gender equality, 19 women felt that their contribution to women's empowerment was paramount in order to change cultural behaviours that inhibit women's sustainable economic opportunities. As the literature review suggests, several reasons exist to engage men in building gender

equality and in the process of women's economic empowerment: men's behaviours, relationships and identities increase inequalities. Engaging men in women's issues, particularly in post-conflict societies like in Rwanda, may decrease men's perception of their masculinity (Slegh, H. and Kimonyo, A., 2010).

According to Pro-femme Twesehamwe responses, some people's misunderstandings regarding "gender equality" are based on the fact that people think that gender refers only to women. One female parliamentarian said that men refuse to legalise their marriages because they feel that gender equality is about women taking away their historical possessions such as land and other household assets.

All skilled, semi-skilled and non-skilled men and women interviewed admitted that people should be treated equally regardless of sex. However, 4 women participants stated that because of the biological differences between men and women, gender inequality cannot be fully eradicated. When asked if both men and women should financially participate for their household, they all agreed. This is a big step towards changes in this patriarchal society where men have been historically considered the sole household providers, while women had to spend their time in domestic activities. As discussed in the literature review, when a woman earns higher income than a man within a household, the husband believes that his male status is under threat instead of seeing it as an economic gain for the household. This is against the background that male and female joint financial participation in the household was perceived as a household economic gain. This attitude change may have been motivated by economic constraints rather than gender equality motivation. In fact the increased poverty within Rwandan households makes it difficult for men to continue being considered as household bread winners.

However, 75 per cent of males and 55 per cent of females interviewed believe that despite the need for men and women's financial participation in the household, men should not be involved in certain domestic activities such as baby care, cooking, bed making and house cleaning. Furthermore, semi and non-skilled participants believe that whenever women fail to fulfil their duties they should be punished by their husbands, and in order to keep their family united females should not report their husbands' violence. According to Sen et al. (2007), to socialise gender roles increases the unequal power dynamics within households. Based on their views, when men and women's roles are socially shaped, this means that behaviours exist which are culturally acceptable for men and women; that men's rights, obligations and expectations are different to those of women, and this constitutes the root cause of gender inequalities.

Most of the skilled participants confirmed that policies and laws implemented to promote gender equality had not yet produced tangible social transformation especially at local level. Parliamentarians and other top officials interviewed felt that to change societal attitudes towards women is a process, and it will take time to convince women that they are capable of becoming bank managers or have similar executive type roles for example. They believe that women are still attached to their traditional roles and often have traditional ambitions of becoming nurses, secretaries, and teachers. However, the two women associations working for women's empowerment promotion and RWAMREC believe that the reason the government's laws and policies have not yet changed Rwandan society is due to the lack of accountability. They believe that despite gender being a cross-cutting issue in every law and institution, it has never been a priority.

This is in line with the views of Judithe Registre, the Director of the Development and Outreach at Women for Women International, regarding the persisting socio-



economic disadvantages for Rwandan women. According to her, Rwandan women continue to be socio-economically marginalised because many of them believe that gender inequality in the country will dissipate as the country continues to grow economically. Due to this popular perception, the government's development priority is not oriented to alleviate these gender inequalities. The government neglects the issue by omitting to provide women with sufficient resources, and although there is steady growth, it may require another decade until these continuing gender inequalities start to fade into history (Registre, 2011).

In summary, the results indicate that the participants are confused about the government's gender equality and women's empowerment political agenda, and/or they do not understand the meaning of "gender equality" or "empowerment" which is once more the indication that women are not involved in the design, implementation and follow up of the projects aimed to enhance their social and economic status.

### **5.3 Chapter summary**

This chapter aims to examine the impact of the Rwandan Government's laws and policies implemented to support women in their socio-economic process. A critical analysis of the government's post-conflict gender policies has been carried out along with the capture of the population's awareness and perception of those policies. Government reforms present gender inclusive gaps.

Research has provided evidence that suggests government gender reforms implemented to promote women's social economic empowerment are not yet giving tangible outcomes because they challenge existing cultural and traditional structures which continue to define male and female roles in Rwandan society. Women's

mobility is limited; they suffer discrimination in private employment because of legal and normative restrictions which add to their work burden. Their limited representation in decision-making bodies at local level restricts their influence in the implementation of laws. Cooperatives models designed to help women earn a fair wage limit women's abilities because the inequitable labour distribution is not taken into account. Traditional female roles and patriarchal perceptions increase gender-based violence, and this additionally inhibits women's economic empowerment.

Based on the survey results, participant interviews and focus group discussions, data indicates that the intended promotion of gender inclusive strategies by the Rwandan Government is inhibited by the persistent extreme patriarchal practices in Rwandan society. Care work and domestic activities remain women's responsibilities, in addition to contributing to the household income, while they continue to suffer from the segregation in the formal employment market. People remain confused about the government's intention to promote gender equality within its post-conflict reforms and the meaning of empowerment. Some women believe that their empowerment refers to getting revenge on men, while others felt that they were empowered simply because they were earning an income despite not being in full control of that income. The presence of many women in the business sector gives them the perception of being economically empowered, and men seem to be excluded from this activity (according to 4 male participants) which may increase male resistance. All the above evidence constitutes factors that limit Rwandan women in their economic empowerment process.

# **Chapter Six: Conclusion, Recommendations and Future Research**

## **6.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the research conclusion, recommendations and proposes areas for future research. The implementation of these recommendations is expected to alleviate gender inequalities and improve women's economic empowerment within post-conflict countries' gender reforms, in order to fully integrate women into the country's social-economic transformation process by unlocking the potential of women. Most of the recommendations are based on women's social, economic and political empowerment case studies and literature coupled with the information from primary and secondary data.

## **6.1 Conclusion**

Despite the availability of economic opportunities and the government's willingness to support gender equality, gender barriers continue to prevent many women in Rwanda from benefiting from the current rapid socio-economic transformation. This study shows a wide existence of hardships to many Rwandan women despite the post-conflict progressive gender reforms implemented by the Rwandan Government to reduce historical gender imbalances. The central part of this research was the case of women's economic empowerment in Rwanda with a focus on the government's post-conflict gender laws and policies implemented to enhance women's economic status. The main aims and objectives of this study were: to explore the dimension of women's empowerment and its associated issues; to

examine the historical gender barriers in Rwanda; to explore the post-conflict gender reforms; to evaluate the challenges arising from government reforms to achieve women's economic empowerment in Rwanda; and to discern the impacts these policies have had on the gender environment in the country.

As captured in the literature, most post-conflict countries adopt new legislation that includes equitable social, economic and political rights. The success of these changes often encounters difficulties relating to the lack of sufficient resources and potential resistance from men and women willing to go back to the pre-existing ideology on gender roles.

The study explored various definitions of the term "empowerment" from feminist perspectives to the development experts' points of view. These include a woman's ability to make strategic choices, her capability to control income and resources, and her ability to make her own decisions that affect her life as well as others. The literature found that due to different and sometimes conflicting views from different countries, global development actors and academics, dependent upon their development objectives, the formula for achieving economic empowerment is changing all the time. For this case study, "economic empowerment" has been defined as the individuals' capability to define and control their economic needs and results. To achieve these goals, this study posits that women have to be able to control resources, manage their income and enjoy a real participation in decision-making from the family unit to national level.

The study illustrated reasons which render economic empowerment a catalyst to obtaining other forms of empowerment. The importance of women's economic empowerment has been explored using social justice and economic development as a justification. As captured in the literature, there is a general consensus that an

economically empowered woman is always a synonym of household and country gain. However, this study has put forward a counter-argument to this general view. The study demonstrated the complexity of the implementation of women's economic empowerment programmes and showed how these programmes can be fruitless if the normative constraints are not taken into account. In addition, the socialisation of gender roles that can limit individuals making life choices has been explored in this study. Furthermore, the literature captured the additional challenges of post-conflict countries which struggle to enhance women's economic status. The historical patriarchal legacy within Rwandan society which continues to define gender roles is shown in the literature. The study explored the dramatic change of women's legal rights in the aftermath of the genocide in Rwanda.

The Rwandan post-conflict era has experienced the improvement of women's economic status thanks to the government's gender equality promotion. However, integrating the post-conflict gender policies, especially at grassroots level, remains problematic. The study found that the relationships between men and women, which continue to be defined by traditional gender roles, remain the main hindrance to the government's gender policies implemented to close the gender gap. Some of the post-conflict laws and policies assessed in the study present many substantial weaknesses. In much of Rwanda, especially in rural areas, the execution of Rwanda's inheritance, land and marital laws is in conflict with the customary laws.

The study has additionally shown that women in Rwanda are not benefiting enough from the government's economic strategies such as Vision 2020 and the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS), because these tools of economic development omitted to take into account legal and normative obstacles that limit women's ability to take advantage of the country's economic opportunities.

In addition, despite the implementation of the centralisation policy and the constitution's guarantee of 30 per cent of women in all decision-making bodies, women remain under-represented at local level, which restricts them in taking part in important decision-making that affects their social and economic lives. Due to the lack of women's skills and confidence, the government's cooperative scheme, chosen as an alternative income generation activity, has been unproductive so far because cooperative models have not reduced the women's financial vulnerability.

Furthermore, the study found that the negative interpretations of the gender-based violence law and its various perceptions, which cause many women not to report household violence, add burdens to women. In addition, the more women become economically independent, the more they are exposed to abuse within the household. This is because of the impact of involving gender social perception that domestic and care giving tasks have to be women's prime responsibility. Thus, once the woman earns more than her husband, this is viewed as she is neglecting her domestic obligations and the masculine identity of the man as head of household and provider is in danger, which causes violence against women (RWAMREC 2010). Based on semi-skilled participant's views and observations made during this research there is differing situations of women in terms of empowerment depending upon whether they are widowed, unmarried or married. Many semi-skilled married and unmarried participants felt that widows are more empowered because the government provides them more financial support than other women. Other unmarried women believed that because they were free to make decisions about their families this led to their empowerment. Based on my observations, female headed households and unmarried women do not have more significant access to resources than married women and are likely to have less household income.

However, they do have control over their earnings and the ability to make independent life choices which contributes to their sense of empowerment. In addition, due to the lack of male authority within the household, female headed households and/or unmarried women are at a reduced risk of exposure to gender based violence which in return increases their level of empowerment.

The study's qualitative and quantitative evidence shows that despite a constitution that guarantees gender equality, women remain economically disadvantaged. Firstly, the policies and programmes designed to encourage women into participating in income generating activities do not take into account the women's many unpaid domestic activities. A high fertility rate, time restriction and HVI/AIDS form some of the main practical obstacles for women to engage in income-generating work. The fact that men continue to control their household's income and expenditure means women are not gaining any economic advantage from their works. Their inability to procure resources and assets and their limited mobility and reproductive rights are the results of continuing inequitable legal constraints. Consequently, they work primarily in the informal sector, and due to persisting patriarchal attitudes are increasingly excluded from formal employment.

Overall, the ongoing misunderstandings and confusion surrounding "gender equality" and the government's intention to support women, may increase men's resistance because they feel that their masculinity and entitlements are under threat. In addition, the study found that some participants expressed their doubts about the effectiveness of the government's gender policies, especially their implementation and accountability. Thus, the above combined factors constrain women to their definitions and control of their own economic needs and outcomes, and these are considered as main barriers to women's empowerment in Rwanda.

## 6.2 Recommendations

The study findings showed the limitations of government gender policies and the legislation and implementation of projects. They restrict women's economic potential because they do not consider adequately pre-existing normative obstacles that inhibit women's ability to make independent economic choices. In addition, the participation fora, designed within the decentralisation policy to allow people, regardless of gender, to participate in the discussions regarding development priorities, exclude gender equality, especially in land tenure, family planning, gender-based violence and property ownership. The Rwandan government has rapidly implemented a top-down gender inclusive economic strategy as well as the decentralisation process which challenges cultural identities especially at local level. According to International Alert "The principle of gender equality has not been properly integrated into the process and decentralisation has not provided a space which could have allowed women to influence the policies defined at the local governance level" (International Alert 2012). Quantitative studies and the qualitative data from this research suggest that outside of the most central political spheres, change in gender relations is minimal. This signifies a disconnection between the implementation process of gender reforms and government policies. Furthermore, based on the survey results, participant interviews and focus group discussions, the intended promotion of gender inclusive strategies by the Rwandan government is inhibited by the persistent extreme patriarchal practices in Rwandan society. In addition, based on the interviews and focus group discussions there is considerable confusion over what gender equality means. 80% of participants interviewed stated that the reasons behind the failure of the government's principle of gender equality through the decentralisation process is due to a lack of education and awareness programme for local communities on gender equality, a lack of expertise for local



personnel on gender analysis, gender planning and budgeting as well as a lack of accountability (see appendices 7 and 8). RWAMREC believed that government policies and programs are limited due to lack of accountability. "Gender equality is everyone's responsibility but it is no one's responsibility. Gender is a cross-cutting issue in all of Vision 2020's objectives but no one is making it a priority" (RWAMREC 2010).

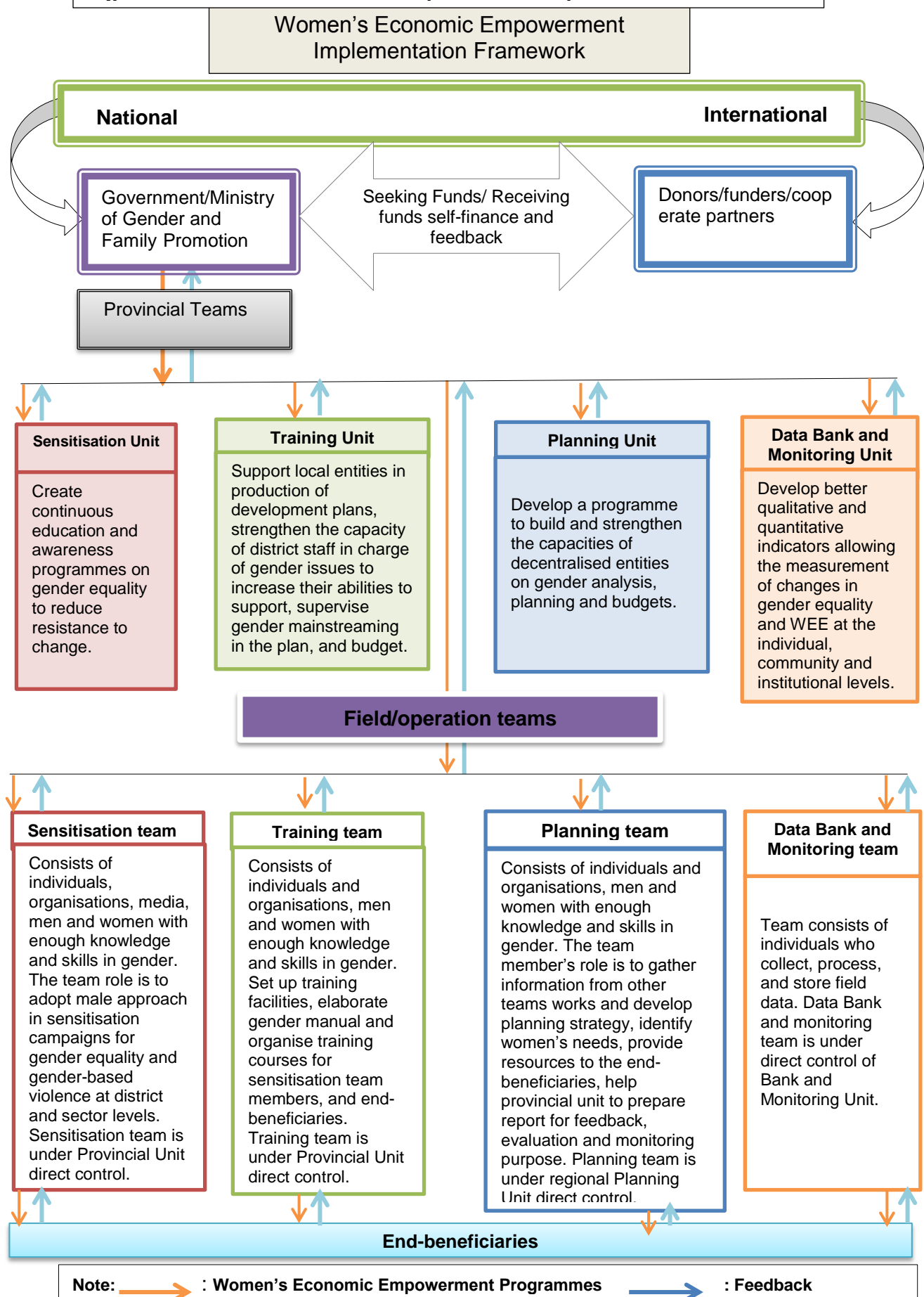
To close the gender gap and initiate gender equality, there is a need to strengthen decision-making powers within local communities in order for women to experience the ownership of the decentralisation policy and for men to understand that their involvement in gender equality is crucial. However, this will happen only if the awareness of the gender equality issue is widespread within Rwandan society as whole. There is confusion about women's empowerment and gender equality is not well known in Rwanda at grassroots level. Hence there should be an introduction of pilot programmes relating to women's economic empowerment, which should be fine-tuned to ensure their appropriateness for widespread dissemination. This study recommends the following women's economic empowerment implementation framework in Rwanda based on bottom-up approach (see figure 6.1) where:

- A team to implement sensitisation campaigns for gender equality at sector and district levels should be created. This team should be coordinated by a sensitisation unit working within each Province. The sensitisation team will help to continually educate local communities about gender equality in order to reduce resistance to change from men at local levels (see figure 6.1).
- A team to organise training for sensitisation team members at local level to implement and strengthen the capacity of staff in charge of gender issues in local entities to enable them to sustain and support the integration of gender in local entities' projects and budgets. This training team based at sectors and

districts entities should report to training unit working from each Province (see figure 6.1).

- A planning team formed of men and women from sector and district entities charged with gathering information from sensitisation and training teams and then develop planning strategy in order to identify women's needs at local level. The planning team is to support the local entities in the implementation of development plans, taking into account the gender dimension and report to the planning unit at provincial level (see figure 6.1).
- A data bank and monitoring team at local level will help to develop quantitative and qualitative indicators in order to measure the change in gender equality at the individual and community level (see figure 6.1).
- The sensitisation, training, planning, data bank and monitoring units in each province will then report to the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion in order for the government to gather resources and elaborate a national gender policy based on the reality from the ground in terms of gender equality and women's needs(see figure 6.1)

**Figure 6.1: Women's economic empowerment Implementation Framework**



### **6.3 Future research**

Given the shocking recent history experienced by Rwanda, and the socio-economic status of women prior to the genocide crisis, this represents an extra-ordinary effort by the government to put the gender equality issue at the forefront of the country's development programmes. This may raise a question of why the post-genocide government has made gender equality such a huge priority, which can be an area to be considered for future research. Many assumptions are possible: maybe the question of the promotion of women's empowerment has been used for social cohesion building, by drawing the public's attention away from the historical ethnic tensions that the country has been experiencing. Another reason may be the fact that the country was solely dependent on the international aid donors, and the use of gender equality issue was viewed as a tool to attract huge international aid.

What is clear is that there are arguments from people in Rwanda suggesting that women's role in policy-making is very minimal, and in reality, the government's effort in promoting gender equality is superficial. They suggest that the government celebrates gender equality to mask the increasing socioeconomic and political inequalities. Some examples justify these hypotheses: Firstly, there is an extreme economic inequality within the Rwandan population, with a GINI coefficient of 50.8 (World Bank 2014), essentially between the rural and urban populations. Secondly, given the majority of women in the Rwandan Parliament, and the fact that until 2008 only the 2006 gender-based violence bill, as a unique bill related to gender equality, had been designed and passed by members of parliament; this may indicate that the legislative branch is under the control of the executive branch (Pearson, 2008).

In addition, for several years, the Kigali regime has been frequently accused by the international community of depriving freedom of expression to its citizens and that there are laws that severely punish anyone who dares to publicly criticise the government (Amnesty International 2011). Thus many politicians, academics, journalists and activists were jailed for having expressed criticism of the government's practices, and this may distort the available literature on the real intention of the government's reforms towards the economic livelihoods of women in Rwanda, and which intentions may be the starting point of the ineffectiveness of the post-conflict gender reforms.

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## Appendix 1: Research Questionnaire

### Part A

#### PERSONAL DATA

1. Job Title.....

2. *What is your age group in years?*

Please circle (O)

20 - 25

26 - 30

31 - 40

41 - 50

50 +

3. *What is your gender?*

Male ☐ Female ☐

4. *What is the sector of your activity?*

i.e: Education, development planning, .....

## Part B

### PERCEPTION OF GENDER EQUALITY AND GOVERNMENT REFORMS

Please indicate using the scale provided

i.e. 1 = Low, 2 =Intermediate, 3 = High, 4 = Very High

**5. How do you know the following laws and policies?**

- |                              |   |   |   |   |
|------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| a) Land policy               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| b) Inheritance law           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| c) Gender-based violence law | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| d) Decentralisation policy   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| e) Vision 2020               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| f) Other                     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Please specify.....

**6. Which of the factors may be a constraint to gender equality and women's economic empowerment?**

- |                             |   |   |   |   |
|-----------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| b) Culture and traditions   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| c) Lack of women's interest | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| d) Lack of women's skills   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| e) Violence against Women   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| f) Resistance of men        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| g) Lack of political will   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| h) Other                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Please specify.....

**7. How do you rate discrimination against women in formal employment?**

1 2 3 4

**8. How do you rate the government's support to women?**

1 2 3 4

**9. How do you rate gender equality and women empowerment in the country's political agenda?**

1 2 3 4

**10. How do you agree that men should be sensitised in women's empowerment process?**

1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, 4 = strongly agree

1 2 3 4

**11. How do you feel empowered?**

0= don't know, 1=Low, 2=Intermediate, 3= High, 4= Very high

0 1 2 3 4

Please indicate below any other key issues in relation to Rwandan women's socio-economic empowerment in Rwandan society that may not have been addressed by this questionnaire:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

## **Appendix 2: Research Interview questions**

### **Questions for Skilled participants**

1. What is your age group?
2. What is your gender?
3. In which sector are you working?
4. How long have you been in this work?
5. Can you tell me about the challenges facing women in their economic empowerment process?
6. What women need to strengthen their economic capacity?
7. How Vision 2020 succeeded in integrating gender issue in its economic development strategies?
8. One of the objectives of Vision 2020 is to transform the agricultural sector as it is currently. Considering the number of women working in this sector, could you tell me about the success of this objective if women are not sufficiently involved?
9. How do you assess gender mainstreaming at local level?
10. How do you perceive the government's support to women? In terms of laws and policies?
11. Are you aware of the national budget allocated specifically for gender mainstreaming in each Ministry?

12. How does GMO in holding different institutions accountable for implementing gender equality programmes?
13. Are women discriminated in the formal employment sector?
14. How men are they sensitized?
15. What are women's hopes and ambitions for the future?
16. How do you feel empowered?

### **Questions for semi-skilled participants**

1. What is your age group?
2. What is your gender?
3. In which sector are you working?
4. How long have you been in this work?
5. Can you tell me about the challenges facing women in their economic empowerment process?
6. What women need to strengthen their economic capacity?
7. What kind of support women need? And where they normally seek this support?
8. How do you perceive the government's support to women? In terms of laws and policies?
9. What are your hopes and ambitions for the future?
10. Is it important to sensitize men about gender equality?
11. How men are they sensitized?
12. Do you feel empowered?

## **Questions for non-skilled participants**

1. What is your age group?
2. What is your gender?
3. In which sector are you working?
4. How long have you been in this work?
5. Can you tell me about the challenges facing women in their economic empowerment process?
6. What women need to strengthen their economic capacity?
7. What kind of support women need? And where they normally seek this support?
8. How do you perceive the government's support to women?
9. Is it important to sensitize men about gender equality?
10. How men are they sensitized?
11. What are your hopes and ambitions for the future?
12. Do you feel empowered?

## **Questions for Focus group discussions: Cooperative members**

1. What is your age group?
2. What is your gender?
3. In which sector are you working?
4. How long have you been in this work?
5. Can you tell me about the challenges facing women in their economic empowerment process?

6. What women need to strengthen their economic capacity?
7. Could you tell me about your experience before joining this cooperative?
8. What are the main challenges you face in this cooperative?
9. Do you have someone to help you?
10. Do you think that women entrepreneurs are sufficiently supported by the government?
11. How do you perceive the government's support to women, in terms of laws and policies?
12. What are your hopes and ambitions for the future?
13. Is it important to sensitize men about gender equality?
14. How men are they sensitized?
15. Do you feel empowered



## Appendix 3: Informed consent form

Faculty of Business, Environment and Society Coventry University

Informed consent form

FOR STUDENT PROJECT

NAME OF STUDENT:

Pascal Niyonkuru

NAME OF UNIVERSITY DIRECTOR OF STUDIES:

Dr Marion

MacLellan

COURSE TITLE: BESA1G Geography, Environment and Disaster Management

TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT: *The Burden of rapid socio-economic*

*transformation: Case study of women's economic empowerment in post-conflict*

*Rwanda*

### PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

The aim of this research is the assessment of post-conflict reforms aiming to enhance women's social-economic status in contemporary Rwanda. The purpose of the questionnaire or interview is to get the views from professionals, Women's organizations and other person involved in women's social-economic development in Rwanda. This project will help to further the great role of women in the Rwandan development as well as to equip the global planners and decision-makers to enhance the social and economic role of women in the developing world.

## **PARTICIPATION IN THIS RESEARCH WILL INVOLVE**

Participations in this research will be involved in a self-completion closed ended questionnaire or in a face to face interview. The questionnaire will take five to ten minutes each of the participant's time.

## **FORESEEABLE RISKS OR DISCOMFORTS**

To the best of my knowledge there are no Risks or Discomforts associated with this research.

## **BENEFITS TO THE PARTICIPANT OF PARTICIPATION**

You may not benefit directly from taking part in this study. However, your participation will help to further the great role of women in the Rwandan development as well as to equip the global planners and decision-makers to enhance the social and economic role of women in the developing world.

## **WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO YOUR DATA**

Any data/ results from your participation in the study will be used by me as part of my project work. The data will also be available to Coventry University. It may also be published in academic works, but your name or identity will not be revealed.

If you have any questions or queries, I, Pascal Niyonkuru, will be happy to answer them via e-mail: [niyonkup@uni.coventry.ac.uk](mailto:niyonkup@uni.coventry.ac.uk) . Or telephone: 07939302613. If I cannot help you, you can speak to Dr Marion MacLellan, my Director of studies via e-mail [m.maclellan@coventry.ac.uk](mailto:m.maclellan@coventry.ac.uk) . Or telephone: 024 7688 7043.

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant or feel you have been placed at risk you can contact Dr Marion MacLellan via e-mail: [m.maclellan@coventry.ac.uk](mailto:m.maclellan@coventry.ac.uk) . Or telephone: 024 7688 7043.

I confirm that I have read the above information. The nature, demands and risks of the project have been explained to me.

I have been informed that there will be no benefits/ payments to me for participation  
(Delete as appropriate)

I knowingly assume the risks involved and understand that I may withdraw my consent and discontinue participation at any time without penalty and without having to give any reason.

Participant's signature \_\_\_\_\_Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Investigator's signature \_\_\_\_\_Date

## **Appendix 4: Information leaflet**

### **Information leaflet**

**Faculty of Business, Environment and Society  
Coventry University**

### **FOR STUDENT PROJECT**

**NAME OF STUDENT:** Pascal Niyonkuru

**NAME OF UNIVERSITY DIRECTOR OF STUDIES:** Marion MacLellan

**COURSE TITLE:** BESA1G Geography, Environment and Disaster Management

**TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT:** *The Burden of rapid socio-economic*

*transformation: Case study of women's economic empowerment in post-conflict*

*Rwanda*

### **PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH**

The aim of this research is the assessment of post-conflict reforms aiming to enhance women's social-economic status in contemporary Rwanda. The purpose of the questionnaire or interview is to get the views from professionals, Women's organizations and other person involved in women's social-economic development in Rwanda.

By participating in this research you will be involved in a self-completion questionnaire or in a face to face interview. The questionnaire will take five to ten minutes each of the participant's time; while interview will take a maximum of 1h 45 min. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you decide not to participate there will not be any negative Consequences. Please be aware that if you decide to participate, you may stop participating at any time and you may decide not to answer any specific question. By answering my questions you are consenting to your data being used in my study. No record will be made of your name so information is all anonymous and confidential.

### **BENEFITS TO THE PARTICIPANT OF PARTICIPATION**

You may not benefit directly from taking part in this study. However, your participation will help to further the great role of women in the Rwanda development as well as to equip the planners and decision-makers to enhance the economic and political role of women in the developing world.

If you have any questions or queries **Pascal Niyonkuru** will be happy to answer them via e-mail: [niyonkup@uni.coventry.ac.uk](mailto:niyonkup@uni.coventry.ac.uk) . If I cannot help you, you can speak to **Dr Marion MacLellan**, the Director of studies. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant or feel you have been placed at risk you can contact the Director of the studies, Dr Marion MacLellan via e-mail: [m.maclellan@coventry.ac.uk](mailto:m.maclellan@coventry.ac.uk)

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Participant's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date

Investigator's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date

## Appendix 5: Interview Participant individual code

Participant	Sector of activity	Code
Participant 1	Bank	BA1
Participant 2	Education	ED1
Participant 3	NGO	NG1
Participant 4	Decision-making	DM1
Participant 5	Development planning	DP
Participant 6	Commerce	BUS
Participant 7	MED	MED
Participant 8	Education	ED2
Participant 9	Decision-making	DM2
Participant 10	Education	ED3
Participant 11	Women's association	WAS1
Participant 12	NGO	NG2
Participant 13	Health	H
Participant 14	Decision-making	DM2
Participant 15	Women association	WAS2
Participant 16	Independent farm	INDEF
Participant 17	Petty trade	PT
Participant 18	Decision -making	DM3
Participant 19	Decision –making	DM4
Participant 20	Decision -making	DM5

## Appendix 6: Focus group discussion individual code

Participant	Sector of activity	Code
Participant A	Cooperative 1	COP1A
Participant B	Cooperative 1	COP1B
Participant C	Cooperative 1	COP1C
Participant A	Cooperative 2	COP2A
Participant B	Cooperative 2	COP2B
Participant C	Cooperative 2	COP2C
Participant A	Cooperative 3	COP3A
Participant B	Cooperative 3	COP3B
Participant C	Cooperative 3	COP3C

## **Appendix 7: Interview and Focus Group Discussion Responses**



Participant NO	Participant codes	Coded Interview Responses															
		IQ01 - What is your gender?	IQ02 - What is your age group?	IQ03 - In which sector are you working?	IQ04 - Working experience	IQ05 - Can you tell me about Challenges facing women in their economic empowerment process?	IQ06 - What women need to strengthen their economic capacity?	IQ07 - How Vision 2020 succeeded in integrating gender issue in its economic development strategies?	IQ08 - One of the objectives of Vision 2020 is to transform the agricultural sector as it is currently. Considering the number of women working in this sector, could you tell me about the success of this objective if women are not sufficiently involved?	IQ09 - How do you assess gender mainstreaming at local level ?	IQ10 - How do you perceive the government's support to women? In terms of laws and policies?	IQ11 - Are you aware of the national budget allocated specifically for gender mainstreaming in each ministry?	IQ12 - How does GMO is holding different institutions accountable for implementing gender quality programmes?	IQ13 - Are women discriminated in the formal employment?	IQ14 - How men are they sensitized?	IQ15 - What are your hopes and ambitions for the future?	IQ16 - How do you feel empowered?
1	BA1	F	31-40	Bank	5	LOR+BDW	RES+ICP	DKN	IMP	NNE	GBV+MAN	NO	DKN	YES	LAC	DKN	YES+NO
2	ED1	F	41-50	EDUCATION	8	LOR+TRP	EDU+ICP	DKN	IMP	NNE	LLA+INL+V20	NO	DKN	YES	NEN	DKN	YES
3	NG1	F	26-30	NGO	4	PAT	PAC	LTL	WTI	LTL	LAC+MAN	NO	LAC	YES	MAN	DKN	YES
4	DM1	F	31-40	DECISION MAKING	4	LOR+PAT	PAA	OTR	IMP	GMO	OTR+INL	NO	WLL	STM	NEN	SOS	YES
5	DP1	M	31-40	DEVELOP.	6	LOR+PAT	RES	NRY	IMP	GOOD	INL+LLA+GBV	NO	DKN	NO	DNT	SOS	N/A
6	BUS	F	41-50	BUSINESS	11	PAT	PAA	LTL	IMP	NNE	GBV+INL+MAN	NO	DKN	YES	MAN	MAC	YES
7	MED	F	26-30	MEDIA	4	LOR	PAA	LTL	IMP	AVR	INL+MAN	NO	LTL	YES	MAN	MAC	YES
8	ED2	M	31-40	EDUCATION	7	LOR+TRP	RCP	DN	IMP	OTR	OTR	NO	GOOD	DKN	MAN	MAN	NEN
9	DM2	F	31-40	DECISION	5	LOR+TRP	RES	SCS	WTI	LQP	MAN	NSB	MAN	LTL	MAN	SOS	ENO
10	DP2	F	31-40	DEVELOPMENT PLANNING	6	BDW+LPA	RWR	LTL	IMP	LQP	IMN+V20+MAN	NO	MAN	LTL	NEN	SOS	YES
11	NG2	F	26-30	NGO	5	LPA	PAA	LTL	IMP	LQP	MAN	NO	LTL	YES	NEN	IMI	NEN
12	H	F	26-30	HEALTH	4	HFR+HIS	FPP	LTL	IMP	LTL	MAN	NO	LTL	YES	NEN	OPM	YES
13	DM3	F	41-50	DECISION	6	RPC+LOR	PAA	OTR	IMP	LQP	OTR	NO	MAN	NO	NEN	OPM	YES+NO
14	DM4	F	31-40	DECISION	4	PAT+LOR	PAA	OTR	IMP	GOOD	GOOD+INL+GBV	NO	WELL	YES	MAN	OPM	TIM
15	DM5	F	31-40	DECISION	6	LOR+BDW	PAA	SCS	IPM	LTL	GOOD	NO	MAN	LTL	MAN	OPM	YES
16	DM6	F	31-40	DECISION MAKING	3	LOR+BDW	PAA	NRY	IMP	AVR	OTR+V20+GBV	NO	MAN	NO	MAN	OPM	TIM

### Semi-Skilled Participants

Participant No	Participant codes	Coded Focus Group Discussion Responses														
		IQ01 - What is your gender?	IQ02 - What is your age group?	IQ03- In which sector are you working?	IQ04 - Working experience	IQ05 - Can you tell me about the challenges facing women in their economic empowerment?	IQ06 - What women need to strengthen their economic capacity?	IQ07 - Could you tell me about your experience before joining this cooperative ?	IQ08 - What are the main challenges you face in this cooperative?	IQ09 - Do you have someone to help you?	IQ10 - Do you think that women entrepreneurs are sufficiently supported by the government?	IQ11 - How do you perceive the government's support to women in terms of laws and policies?	IQ12 - What are your hopes and ambitions for the future?	IQ13 - Is it import to sensitize men about gender?	IQ14 - How men are they sensitized?	IQ15 - Do you feel empowered?
1	COP1A	M	26-30	cooperative	3	LOR	ICP	TLD	IMA+BDW	NEN	NO	ENO	OBM	YES	NEN	YES
2	COP1B	F	26-30	cooperative	3	LOR+ VAW	FNS+SKL	STS	IMA	NEN	NEN	DKN	DKN	YES	NAT	YES
3	COP1C	F	31-40	cooperative	1	VAW	ICP	COP	LOR+BDW	NEN	NO	NEN	DKN	YES+NO	NEN	YES
4	COP2A	F	41-50	cooperative	2	VAW	ICP	COP	LOR+BDW	NNE	NEN	MAN	NHP	YES	MAN	YES
5	COP2B	M	41-50	cooperative	4	LOS	ICP	DRV	LFS+IMA+BDW	NNE	MTM	MTM	DTN	DKN	DN	YES
6	COP2C	F	26-30	cooperative	3	LOR	ICP	TLD	LTR+BDW	NNE	NO	DN	HPE	YES	MAN	YES
7	WAS1	F	41-50	women association	18	LOR+EPR+IC C	CFD+MAC	TCH	LOR	NGO	NEN	NEN+LAC	HPE	YES	NEN	YES
8	WAS2	F	26-30	Women assiciation	4	LOR+VAW+EP R	STC+INC	BNS	LFS+IMA	ASM	NEN	NEN+LAC	HPE	YES	MAN	YES
9	COP3A	F	31-40	cooperative	4	LOR	INC+SKL	TLD	LOR+LTR	NNE	NEN	NEN	HPE	NO	NAT	YES
10	COP3A	F	41-50	cooperative	3	LOR	INC+SKL	TLD	IMA+LTR+BDW	NNE	NEN	MAN	HPE	YES	MAN	YES
11	COP3A	F	31-40	cooperative	1	LOR	INC+SKL	TLD	IMA+BDW	NNE	NEN	ENO	HPE	YES	NAT	YES

### Non-Skilled Participants

Participant NO	Participant codes	Coded Interview Responses											
		IQ01 - What is your gender?	IQ02 - What is your age group?	IQ03- In which sector are you working?	IQ04 - Working experience	IQ05 - Can you tell me about the challenges facing women in their economic empowerment?	IQ06 - What women need to strengthen their economic capacity?	IQ07 - What kind of support women need? And where they normally seek this support?	IQ08 - How do you perceive the government's support to women?	IQ09 - Is it important to sensitize men about gender equality?	IQ10 - How men are they sensitized?	IQ11 - What are your hopes and ambitions for the future?	IQ12- Do you feel empowered?
1	INDPF	F	50+	INDEPENDENT FARM	11	LOL	LND+FRT	FNS+NNE	NEN	NO	NVE	NFT	DKN
2	PT	F	31-40	PETTY TRADE	8	LOR	TNG	FNS+NNE	NEN	YES	NVE	NFT	DKN

## Appendix 8: Coding Sheet

Code	Representation
LOR	Lack of resources
BDW	Burden of double work
TRP	Traditional practices
PAT	Patriarchal attitude
PAA	Power and agency
LPA	Lack of power and agency
HFR	High fertility rate
HI	Health issues
RPC	Reproductive Constraints
DKN	Don't know
EDU	Education
PAC	Patriarchal attitudes to change
MAC	Men attitude to change
RCP	Reducing customary practices
IMI	If men are involved
RWR	Reducing women's responsibilities
FPP	Family planning programmes
GMO	Gender Monitoring Office
NRY	No results yet
WTI	Women to be involved
ENO	Enough
GBV	Gender based violence law
LLA	Land law
LAC	Lack of accountability
INL	Inheritance law
SOS	Sign of success
MAN	More actions needed
IMN	Improvement needed
NSB	No specific budget
IMP	Impossible
NEN	Not enough

VAW	Violence against women
EPR	Early pregnancies
ICC	Income control
FNS	Financial support
INC	Income
CFD	Confidence
ICP	Income control power
STS	Street seller
COP	Cooperative
TLD	Titling land
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
ASM	Association members
MTM	More than men
OPM	Optimistic
TIM	There is improvement
LTL	Little
SCS	success
OTR	On track
DNT	Don't need to
LOL	Lack of land
NNE	None
YES	Yes
NAT	Not at all
SKL	Skills
LND	Land
TNG	Training
NFT	No future
RES	Resources
NVE	Never
N/A	Not applicable
STC	Society to change

FRT	Fertilizers
DRV	Driver
TCH	Teacher
BNS	Business
IMA	Insufficient market
LFS	Lack of financial support
LTR	Lack of training
GOOD	Good
AVR	Average
LQP	Lack of qualified personnel
HPE	Hope
WELL	Well
NO	NO